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MEDITATIONS ON THE COMMUNION OFFICE

BY
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AND WENDELL MERRILL.

The Works of Rev. J. G. H. Barry, D.D.
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By J. G. H. Barry, D. D., Litt. D.

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CONTENTS

VOLUME II

	PAGE
THE PREFACE	3
THE SANCTUS	23
THE BENEDICTUS	43
THE PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS	65
THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION: THE SACRIFICE	87
THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION: THE PRESENCE	109
THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION: THE BENEFITS	131
THE AGNUS	153
THE LORD'S PRAYER	175
THE THANKSGIVING	197
THE GLORIA	219
THE POST COMMUNION COLLECT	243
THE PEACE AND BLESSING	267
THE CONSUMPTION OF THE SPECIES	289
THE EUCHARISTIC LIFE	315

THE EIGHTEENTH MEDITATION
THE PREFACES

The title *Preface* is given to the introduction to the Canon which begins with the *Sursum Corda* and ends with the *Sanctus*. In the early centuries there was much more elaboration here. The earliest form of the Roman Mass which has come down to us had no less than 267 Proper Prefaces. But there has been a constant tendency towards simplification in the Roman Mass and the number has now been reduced to twelve Proper Prefaces and the Common Preface, which is used at all masses for which no Proper Preface is provided. The Prayer Book has gone further and reduced the number to the Common and five Proper Prefaces. The Roman Missal, in addition to those for Christmas, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity Sunday (which we have) gives Proper Prefaces for the Epiphany, during Lent, for masses of the Passion and the Holy Cross, of our Lady, of St. Joseph, of Apostles and Evangelists, and for the Dead. They also use the Christmas Preface on the feasts of the Holy Name, the Purification, Corpus Christi and the Transfiguration; and the Trinity Preface is used on ordinary Sundays. Our proposed revisions of the Prayer Book have added Prefaces as follows: one for the Epiphany; one to be used on the Purification, Annunciation and the Transfiguration, and one for All Saints. The ancient Prefaces were very long, rehearsing great lists of the benefits, beginning with the creation, for which we ought to thank God. The word *Therefore* ("Therefore with Angels and Archangels") which has very little meaning as it stands, referred to this list of benefits.

Let us listen to the Word of God:

And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

Let us picture:

HE heavenly world as it was opened to the vision of S. John. As we look into this world where God sits enthroned, surrounded by the heavenly hosts, we see, through the eyes of the saint an angel sounding his trumpet; and immediately heaven is stirred in response. There arises the sound of great voices, the voices of the Living Creatures who are representative of the whole creation, announcing that the kingdoms of the world have become the Kingdom of God and of His Christ. At once their cry is taken up by the elders whose thrones stand about the throne of God and who are the representatives of the Church of the First-born. They fall on their faces, saying, "We give thanks to thee, O Lord Almighty, because thou hast taken to thee thy great power and hast reigned." That power which seemed for the time to have been permitted to pass out of God's hands while the destiny of the earthly Church was being worked out, is resumed again, and God reigns. Those who have been, as it were, the age-long spectators of the incarnate work, who have watched with so intense an

interest the fortunes of their brethren, cry out in exultant joy as the kingdom comes to its triumphant conclusion. We may believe that though these citizens of heaven are so near God, yet are they permitted to know the mind of God for His Church only as they see His plan unfolded in the development of the Kingdom. They are entranced spectators of the drama of salvation, and though they have no doubt of its solution they ever rejoice in the unfolding of the divine plan in each step of its accomplishment. So new joy and wonder and thanksgiving are ever theirs.

Consider, first,

How heaven rejoices in the work of God on earth; with what sympathetic interest it follows our fortunes; how those whose place is close to the very throne of God Most High are constantly moved to joy and thanksgiving as they perceive the meaning of God's acts and the triumph of his grace. What we may consider the great facts of the incarnate life—the Incarnation, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, the Ascension—are to them mysteries of godliness which as they are unfolded impel them to new acts of adoration and praise. Theirs, too, must often be that same cry which once broke from the lips of S. Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" They seem to have followed much as we do the unfolding of the life of our Lord—they wondered at Bethlehem, were amazed at Calvary, triumphed on the resurrection morning, and worshipped at the Ascension. Through all the checkered history of the earthly Church they are sympathetic onlookers, mingling their prayers with ours. And in this vision of S. John we are permitted a glimpse

into the future and see their joy in the final triumph of the Kingdom of God. In visions such as these it becomes clear to us how little heaven and earth are separated and how real are the sympathy and love that bind them together. The dwellers about the throne have not, as there is sometimes a temptation to feel, become dehumanized and lost to us through the splendor of the new experience; rather, the new experience has deepened their love for us and their longing that we shall share with them the wonder of their new life. And for them too there awaits in our perfecting a farther revelation of the divine love, for they without us shall not be made perfect. The fulness of God's rule will come when the kingdoms of the world become the kingdoms of God and of His Christ.

Consider, second,

That the life and work of our Lord which fills heaven with thankfulness is also the ground of our thanksgiving. The Church has embodied the great facts of our Lord's life in the constant round of the Christian Year that they may never become to us just cold facts of history, but may remain ever-springing sources of interest and energy. It is the mind of the Church that each recurring feast should evoke from us a fresh expression of thankfulness to our Lord for His redemptive action. The Church understands our danger of vague and waning attention and therefore presses home the concrete fact to call out definite responses of gratitude. "It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks—but especially because thou didst give Jesus Christ, thine only Son, to be born as at this time." Or, "chiefly are we bound to praise thee for the glorious resurrection of thy Son, Jesus Christ":—

6 MEDITATIONS ON THE COMMUNION OFFICE

so the Proper Prefaces take up and accentuate the lessons of the great feasts. I wonder how far we respond to this mind of the Church in personal acts of thanksgiving as distinguished from the corporate acts that we make in the course of divine service? As the Church inserts the Proper Prefaces, do we in our private prayers have varying acts of thanksgiving and praise, taking up and individualizing the lessons of the day? Surely our private devotions ought to reflect the public devotion of the Body of Christ of which we are members! Surely we ought thus to strive to appropriate to ourselves the work of our Lord! Only thus can the Christian Year, with its mingled notes of joy and penitence, have much meaning for us. My salvation is the result of the appropriation of our Lord's acts by a living faith; it is not wrought automatically by those acts without response from me.

Let us, then, pray,

To make devout acts of thanksgiving for all our Lord's life and work. Pray, that we may appropriate these by faith, that we may live in Him and He in us.

Confirm, O Lord, in our minds the mysteries of the true faith, that as we confess Him who was conceived of the Virgin to be Very God and Man, so by the power of His saving Resurrection we may be enabled to attain eternal joy; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

THE PREFACES

"Let us give thanks unto our Lord God." And we answer, "It is meet and right so to do." Then we go on to the Preface and in the several Prefaces for the great

feasts find the grounds of thanksgiving detailed. We may sum up this teaching of the Church as to the ground of our thankfulness in that it grows out of the work of our Blessed Lord for us. The great feasts emphasize special acts of His particular stages in His work, but it is the work as a whole,—His life as a whole, which is held up before us to evoke our gratitude.

We are thankful for the life and work of Jesus Christ; for our new relations to God, brought about through Him; for the gift of eternal life which He has imparted to us. We, as Christians, are what we are because He is what He is. If by any possibility we are mistaken about Him we are mistaken about ourselves. If, as we recite it, our Creed rings false we know that our whole theory of life is shattered. Let us make no mistake. Our ears are filled to-day with denunciations of dogma and assurances of the impertinence of Creeds. Many are led by what they regard as a modern and liberal attitude to speak and act as though it were of small importance what one believes, but if we have any spiritual life now, and any certain outlook to the future, it is because the Creeds of the Church are statements of fact. If Jesus Christ was not made "Very Man of the substance of the Virgin Mary His Mother" "by the operation of the Holy Ghost," then there is an end to any teaching of the Incarnation as in the sense in which the Catholic Church has always understood it. The Church has never believed that its Head and Founder was merely a "good man," or a man specially favored by God and filled with the Spirit of God. It does not believe that any man, however good or however blessed by God, can save us. It to-day, as ever, rests firmly upon this assertion, that Jesus Christ is either God of God, Light of

8 MEDITATIONS ON THE COMMUNION OFFICE

Light, Very God of Very God, or He is a creature. It must therefore regard the modern theory which seems to hold that Jesus Christ is not God in the full sense of the word as a lapse from the Christian faith and the presentation to us of a creature as the object of our worship. We are asked to pay Divine honor to one who is not in the full sense, or in any sense that we can understand, God.

It is well to emphasize this because so many people are being unconsciously led away from faith by the persuasions of those who declare that the religion of Christ is not essentially changed by interpretations which seek to make it harmonious with the prevailing trend of modern non-religious thought. The average man is a good-natured person who doesn't like to be thought narrow-minded, or dogmatic, or one who judges harshly and uncharitably of his neighbor. When therefore he is told that his attitude is one of uncharitableness towards his neighbor, that he is denying or doubting the Christian character of "good men" because they don't happen to hold just the same form of belief that he does; when he is pelted with abusive adjectives like narrow and bigoted and uncharitable, he quite naturally seeks shelter from the stormy wind and tempests of Liberalism and protests that really he doesn't hold fast to that which he has received in any such exclusive sense as is attributed to him. He takes up an attitude, that is, of thinking that the faith, as the Church has received and teaches it, is a matter of opinion: is, in fact, a matter of private taste which no one is the better or the worse for holding or denying.

Now a religion that we may hold or not hold, as suits us, is of no spiritual value whatsoever. If religion is

"of men" it may be interesting if one be interested in such things, but it is quite unimportant so far as the eternal issues of life are concerned. One has no hesitation in saying that if Jesus Christ be not what the Preface for Christmas Day declares Him to be, then He is at most an interesting character in history, quite on a par, as we are so often told, with Buddha and Socrates and Mohammed. But He cannot be an object of our worship, or the Saviour of our souls.

We give thanks to God for Him because we believe in Him. Nay, because we have found Him to be our God and Saviour and Mediator and the source of our spiritual life. Christianity, conceived in the light of the Incarnation, is the impartation to us of the very nature of God Himself. It is not primarily or essentially a system of thought and speculation; not a guide to moral action, but a life that is imparted to us and sustained in us by our relation to God in Christ. No man, however "good": no creature, however exalted, can be the source of such life, the ground of such a relation. Blessed Mary herself, for the Catholic the highest of creatures, can only be instrumental in the life of Christ and not the source of life itself. In tampering with the Catholic and historic belief in the Incarnation, therefore, we are not good-naturedly subordinating our opinions to those of others and refraining from insisting on a quite unimportant point in the interests of Church and good fellowship, but we are abandoning the foundation on which our whole theory of the Christian life rests.

No doubt Charity is the greatest of the virtues, but is it really charity to give away what doesn't belong to one, to betray a trust committed to one? One understands the Charity that declines to condemn others; which

refrains from a personal condemnation of those from whose beliefs and actions we dissent; which refuses to confound a man with his beliefs. One doesn't understand it to be charity in any sense good-naturedly to deny or to consent to hold as of small importance the beliefs of the Christian Church because some friend doesn't hold them. Ultimately the whole question involved goes back to this, whether God did indeed make a revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ and whether this revelation was committed to the Christian Church to teach, or whether Christianity is a shifting mass of speculation which we must expect to be re-shaped and transformed in accordance with the thought-tides of each generation. The latter seems to be the theory of modern Liberalism and if it be true, then it is impossible for me to see how Christianity can have any interest whatsoever. Certainly it can have no supernatural power.

And supernatural power is what we want and what we have assumed was assured to us in the life and work of Jesus. It is involved in the theory of His Incarnation and the Church has always held and taught it. It is pledged to us in His Resurrection from the dead. The Church's belief in the Resurrection is explicitly stated in the Preface for Easter Day and when one tries to think out what the Resurrection means, one has no difficulty in understanding the central place given it in Apostolic preaching and in the Creeds of the Church.

For the Resurrection is no detached miracle; no mere exhibition of power. One of the difficulties men find in the acceptance of miracles arises, I suppose, from the fact that they are accustomed to look upon them as isolated events, as exceptions in the ordinary conduct of the world. But a miracle can only be understood by con-

sidering it in relation to the person who performs it. It is not an isolated marvel, it is the act of a person, an integral part of his life. The Resurrection is the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, of a special person, under special circumstances. Studied not as a detached "violation of the laws of nature" but as an incident in the life of Incarnate God, it becomes intelligible. I doubt very much if it would ever present any difficulty to one who believed that part of the Creed which leads up to it. The difficulty we might feel about the Resurrection of the dead, considered in the abstract, mostly fades away when we consider this concrete case in the experience of one whom we believe to be Incarnate God.

And as Catholic Christians with special beliefs and experiences in the Christian life, we find the Resurrection of Christ not only intelligible, but necessary. We cannot understand the Christian life without it. A mere survival of death in the case of Jesus does not at all satisfy the demands of our religion, for that religion depends upon the permanence of the humanity of Jesus, of the permanence of His Body, however transfigured and spiritualized. At the heart of our religion is the fact of our incorporation into Christ when we are made "members of His Body, of His flesh and His bones." Christ is to us no isolated person, influencing us through memory of His past work, or even acting upon us from heaven. He is our Head, the Head of the Body, which as the outcome of His work He has created. Upon the bodily resurrection of Christ depends absolutely the existence of that mystical Christ of which we form a part. He is the Head; we are the members. He is the Vine; we are the branches; He is the Foundation Stone, the Head of the Corner; we are the living stones built upon Him.

We cannot at all understand our relation, except as it involves the continued existence of Christ's full humanity. Insistence upon the Resurrection therefore is not an obstinate clinging to an unessential belief, inherited from a past relatively uneducated, but it is the holding fast of our very religion which cannot survive without it. If Christ be not risen from the dead, then is our faith vain.

And our hope is vain, also, for our outlook to the future is conditioned upon our belief in the Resurrection. For our hope and trust for the future is in a human immortality. We are here incorporated into Christ, and if we abide in Him we look to be raised with Him, or rather, in Him, as one with Him, as His members. The association which is begun here will be unbroken. And that association is not simply association with Christ, but an association with all who are in Christ. We are not only the members of Him, but we are members one to another. In other words, Heaven is but the final state of the mystical Christ. Relations, then, which are begun here when we are made members of Him are continued because He continues. And not only do they continue, but they become operative in a more clearly realized sense than they can here on the Church on earth. Our spiritual relations one to another are made difficult by the earthly conditions of life, which constantly cross and complicate them. We are now members of Christ under temporal conditions, and it is only when these conditions have been transcended that the full meaning of our divine sonship can emerge. And it cannot at all emerge if Christ is not risen from the dead in the fulness of His human life. And if the Resurrection be not the pledge that we too shall arise in Him, and like Him,

to the completeness of our humanity : if our religion means but the partial revival of our humanity, which is implied in the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, it means something quite other than the Christian Church has meant from the beginning of its career. It is emphatically "another Gospel."

The teaching of the Church as to the Resurrection is supplemented, reinforced and clarified by its teaching as to the Ascension. It is the Christ Who appeared. And as He appeared to the Apostles, He is declared to have ascended in their sight into the heavens, there to prepare a place for us. It is of course conceivable that this isn't true. The Church may possibly be mistaken in what she asserts ; but there can be no manner of doubt what it is that she asserts. And to substitute that fading shadow of religion, which is Modern Liberalism, for the full, completed assertion of Scriptural fact, is not to interpret but to deny. And to us once more it is not to deny a past fact which is relatively unimportant to the Twentieth Century, but to deny the existence of a permanent relation which constitutes the very essence of our religion. We cannot assert too often that the very existence of the Catholic religion hangs upon the permanence of our Lord's full humanity. And in view of modern denials of the fact of our Lord's bodily ascension we turn with thankful hearts to the explicit assurance of the Ascension Day Preface. There our Blessed Lord is revealed to us as He is revealed in the Apocalypse of S. John, man of the substance of His mother, our Redeemer and our Head, the sole means of our approach to the fulness of the Godhead, which is the Blessed Trinity. There He is shown to us still concerned with us and for us, looking to a future which He purposed to share with

us, preparing "a place for us that where He is thither we might also ascend and reign with Him in glory."

But in the meantime our eyes are not fixed exclusively on the future. That relation to our risen Head, which is the basis of our hope for the future, is a relation which is operative now. If He be preparing a place for us, we are preparing ourselves for the place and with the center of our preparation is our conformity to His life. I might here dwell upon that relation as it is constituted and maintained through the Blessed Sacrament, but that I shall have to speak of at length later. It is enough here to recall that that risen humanity is the source of all the graces of our life.

That which builds us up and develops us spiritually is sanctifying grace. And sanctifying grace is the outcome of our relations to our risen Lord. That union with Him which is described as our evermore dwelling in Him and He in us, is productive of a constant action on us of that Divine grace and a constant reaction of response on our part. Growth is the measure of this reaction, is the indication of the intensity of our response to the guest. The gardener waters his plants and they take up so much of the water as they can use in the process of growth. The Divine Gardener waters his plants with the dew of His grace and they assimilate so much of His gift as they know how to use. The difference is that the plant assimilates automatically. The man chooses how and how much of grace he will use.

Our universal vocation is to use the grace of God so richly ministered to us as the result of our ingrafting into Him. We use it in the normal course of our spiritual growth that we may become increasingly like Him and that likeness appears not only in spiritual character,

in what we call personal religion, but it appears in spiritual energy, in our effectiveness as the servants of Christ. For it is not in isolation that we are energized by the grace of God but as members of the Body of the Mystical Christ. The whole body grows up in unity, each member ministering to other members of the graces that flow to each from the Head.

We remind ourselves that the Distributor of the graces of the Body, dividing to every man severally as he will, is the Holy Spirit of God. The Preface for Whitsunday emphasizes this fact to us. The coming of the Holy Spirit is the coming of a person Who enters into personal relations with us. He is the animating spirit of the Body, the life and energy which functions through it. The Preface dwells entirely upon that coming of the Spirit which our Lord had promised to His apostles and upon the immediate effects of that coming; but we need to think of that action as constant and permanent in the Body.

Two things especially we need to emphasize to-day when we are confronted with attempts to evacuate the Christian religion of most of its meaning under the guise of reinterpretation. The first is that the Holy Spirit, Who is presented to us in the revelation of God made in scripture and preserved in the Church, is a person and not an influence. Here we are thankful for the Preface for Trinity Sunday, with its emphasis on the distinction of the Divine Persons and their equality. "For that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality." The battle as to the personality of the Holy Ghost one had thought to be sufficiently fought out in the early centuries of the Church's history,

but in fact we never get rid of any heresy. The human mind travels around in certain ruts and arrives periodically at the same errors, learning little from the intellectual experiences of the race. So to-day, under new names, we have to renew the old battle over the Divinity of the Son and the personality of the Spirit. What gives us confidence in its renewed strife is that we have the history of the Church and of its successful dealing with these questions in the past. To have once more to renew the same controversy is no doubt depressing. One sometimes wonders at the inefficiency of modern thought and its incapacity to invent a new heresy. It would be so much more exhilarating to fight a novelty than to renew the old battle and to meet once more the arguments which are stale and frayed with centuries of use. Really the Devil is a very tiresome and conventional person. It is centuries since he has invented a new heresy or a new sin. Or is perhaps the true account of the matter that the human race is so stupid that the old heresies and the old sins will sufficiently serve the diabolic purposes?

However that may be, all that can be said as to the personality of the Holy Spirit was said centuries ago. What is important for us is to understand clearly the importance of belief in that personality. In our spiritual life we are not dealing with a vague influence, or even an influence that emanates from God, but we are dealing with the Divine person, who has entered into the most intimate relations with us, relations so intimate that they can only be described as indwelling. What this means is that in the development of our spiritual life God is acting on us, not from the outside, in the way of an influence, but from the inside, by love and spiritual sustenance. Our souls are not abodes which He occasionally visits in an-

swer to our prayers, but temples in which He dwells. The Holy Spirit is at *home* in us, and we have but to yield ourselves to His silent embrace to grow up into the fulness of spiritual strength. It is His action which affects the intimacy between God and us, which is in fact our union with the Blessed Trinity, for we do well continually to remind ourselves that the Trinity is not divided and that where one Person is, there of necessity is the fulness of God.

We hold fast then to the fact of the personality of the Holy Spirit and we hold fast to this other fact that He was not conferred upon the Apostles in separateness, but as they were a body, constituting the Church. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of the Body of Christ inspiring that Body and leading it into all the truth. The Apostles were not something other than the Church, outside of it and organizing and directing it, they were of the Church, special organs of the Church, through which the Spirit acts. "And He gave some, Apostles ; and some, prophets ; and some, evangelists ; and some, pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, or the work of the ministry, for the building up of the Body of Christ."

We conceive of this Body energized by the Holy Spirit as a Body with a mission in the world. It exists as the instrument of God for the conversion of the nations. So we watch the unfolding of the life of the Church through the early stages of its experience and what impresses us perhaps most is the unresting energy with which it sets about its apparently impossible mission of converting the world. S. Paul is of course the outstanding example because we have fairly full details of his career, but there is no reason to suppose that he was an exception in zeal for the triumph of the Gospel. As we follow him he

seems unable to rest anywhere. He goes from city to city, hardly waiting to gather and organize a small group of converts. He constantly seeks new ground, declining to build on another man's foundation, and all through the Roman Empire other missionaries are running on the same errand. Every Christian, it seems, considered himself to be a missionary. Not only the ordained minister of Christ, but all who had been baptized into Christ are filled with the same spirit. The soldier in his camp; the merchant on his journeying from city to city; the very slave in his quarters, all are heralds of the new Way. Every Christian felt himself bound, or rather, privileged, to carry the good news to all whom he met.

There is perhaps no clearer indication of the ineffectiveness of our religion than the almost universal loss of this sense of a personal responsibility in the spreading of the Gospel message. The zeal and energy of the first generations were the outcome of the yielding of their lives to the impulse of the Spirit. Obviously the modern world is not yielding. There is probably no word which would less describe the average member of the Church than the word missionary. The picture we call up when we try to think of the business men of our acquaintance talking to their associates and customers of the religion of Christ, of its strength and of its beauty, produces only a smile at its wild impossibility. One talks of business methods and hears of the agents of business corporations given a free hand in expenditure, that they may give a "good time" to prospective customers, the good time extending to any limit the customer cares to fix. There is no need that the limit shall be a moral one. We try to picture social intercourse in a modern city leading to spiritual

conversation and communion, and we experience the same difficulty. The imagination will not carry so far. We cannot think of the modern dinner party as the center of a religious propaganda.

What has happened? We have deliberately pushed what we have left of religion into a strictly subordinate position of life and we have declined one of the major responsibilities of the Christian, the responsibility of missionary activity, of being strong centers of Christian influence and force. The common plea of unfitness is only another plea of guilt. To be a Christian at all means to be fit to propagate the faith; means to be a living embodiment of Christian principle and Christian energy acting on others in the interests of Christ.

Instead of this, the modern Christian is commonly nothing better than a parasite, living a dreary life of dependence on the life of the Body, which functions only faintly in him. The spiritual lassitude of the present-day Christian congregation is horrible to contemplate as an evidence of failure to respond to the impulses of the Spirit. Our religion seems almost the final struggle of one on whom the doom of death has passed. The consequence is that those who realize this fact in many cases turn away from the Gospel. They substitute something for it, or demand that the Gospel be re-interpreted and made over to suit the needs of the modern mind. One can understand them in their criticism and, up to a certain point, sympathize with them, but one cannot view their efforts or their program with any hope. If hope there be, and certainly we cannot abandon hope, it lies in the revival of the Catholic life consequent upon a renewed dedication of ourselves to the influence of the

Holy Spirit. We have turned away from God to the world. The modern program asks that we shall turn still further away and still more to the world.

But the challenge of the Catholic faith is that once more we abandon the motives of worldliness and rededicate ourselves to the mind of the Spirit. The energy of the Incarnate Life, ministered by the Holy Spirit, is still at the disposal of anyone who will use it. It is still capable, as we know from many instances, of regenerating life. It is still capable of regenerating society. It can still rescue society from the sea that lies before it as it runs violently down the steep place of modern unbelief and moral laxity. What is called for is that those who truly believe the Catholic religion, who believe in the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Holy Spirit, should not be content with holding these truths as a personal and private possession, in which case they all seem to become sterile and ineffective, but to hold them as a sacred trust, to be administered in the interests of the brethren. We thank God that we have received the religion of Christ whenever we participate in the Mass, but what shall it profit us to have received the Treasure of God if we lay it up unused? If we do not act as stewards of the Mysteries, as lovers and seekers of those sheep for whom the doors of the fold stand ever open?

THE NINETEENTH MEDITATION
THE SANCTUS

The *Sanctus*, "Holy, Holy, Holy," is not only a primitive and universal feature of the Mass, but is also older than Christianity. We here join in the worship of heaven. Isaiah saw in his vision (vi, 3) the Seraphim above the throne of God, one crying unto another "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." And we believe that the angels join with us and hover round about our altars, worshipping, at every Mass. So important is this moment that the bell is rung to recall the minds of those whose attention may be wandering, so that they may join in the angel chorus.

Our Mass gives the *Sanctus* in a changed and mutilated form. The First Prayer Book did not translate it exactly and later it was further altered. The following comparison shows just what the changes were:

LATIN MASS

*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God
of hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of
thy glory:
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He that cometh
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.*

PRAYER BOOK

*Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God
of hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of
thy glory:
Glory be to thee, O Lord
Most High.*

Let us listen to the word of God:

They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Let us picture:

S JOHN standing before the open door—the door of divine revelation. As he looks into the disclosed heaven the first object upon which his eye rests is a throne. He is looking upon the central mystery of heaven, the place of the divine Self-revelation. And what did S. John see? He makes no attempt to describe Him that sitteth upon the throne. It would seem that instead of a describable form his eyes were filled with flashing masses of color. The brilliant white light of the jasper met and mingled with the fiery red of the sard, and both were circled by a rainbow arch of gleaming emerald. It is as beauty that the saint sees God and as his eyes recover from the first blinding impression he sees that between him and the throne there stretches a sea of glass, crystal pure, reflecting, no doubt, the splendor of the light inapproachable wherein is the divine Presence. About the throne there are two circles of beings—the four living creatures who are the personification of the natural world with its infinite unsleeping movement, “they rest not day and night”; and the thrones of the four and twenty elders who as representatives of God’s earthly kingdom offer their constant worship. The chant of the Living Creatures rises in its majestic so-

lemnity, filling heaven with the strains of the Ter Sanctus, and, as the song goes up, the Elders rise from their thrones and fall prostrate before the majesty of God. Their song mingles with the Sanctus of the Living Creatures: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." Let us too, kneel, and let our hearts echo the heavenly chaunt: "Thou art worthy, O Lord!"

Consider, first,

That for many centuries, whenever the divine Sacrifice has been offered, the offerers have joined themselves to the worship of heaven and with bowed heads have repeated the chaunt of the Living Creatures, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty! Awe in the presence of the divine Majesty, joy in our great privilege, enter and mingle in our hearts as we take our part in the chorus of the universe. For us, too, a door is now to be opened in heaven and we are to see the veiled Presence of God; not, to be sure, veiled in the flashing splendor of mingled gem-like lights, but veiled by humble earthly elements which Incarnate God has chosen to be the medium of his Presence for us here on earth. Under the species of bread and wine God now comes, maintaining the humility of his Incarnation. But the song with which we greet his sacramental approach is the same song that acknowledges His heavenly glory; there in the circle of the emerald bow, here in the hiddenness of the sacramental species. And our faith pierces the barriers which nature imposes; by it heaven is drawn to earth and earth is raised to heaven, that our voices are heard mingling with those of angels and archangels, and we

feel ourselves, even as they, in the light of the Presence which fills the glorious throne. Time and space are no more for us as we hymn the glorious majesty of God Most High. The barriers melt, the door opens, and though like St. John, we stand only on the threshold and see far over the sea of glass the worship of those who surround the throne, yet we feel our essential union with them and our right to participate in their action, in their thanksgiving and joy. We are of the same communion of saints as they; we are offerers of the same worship and partakers of the same sacrifice; and when the angelic hymn dies away and we go on with our action, the same God whom they worship draws near to us and gives Himself to us, and we become the tabernacles of His Presence that we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us.

Consider, second,

The holy joy, the joy unspeakable and full of glory, which should be ours as we are thus uplifted to be sharers of the worship of heaven! We often bring tired bodies and dulled souls to this sacrifice, hearts that are burdened and grief-stricken, minds preoccupied and distracted by the disquietude of this world. But now is the time to throw off all that; now is the time to rouse our spiritual nature to its fullest activity. The sacrifice is offered; heaven is filled with the joy of it. We have lifted up our hearts in faith and have fixed our faith on Him who created and redeemed and sanctifies us, rehearsing His stupendous works for our salvation. Let then all doubt and fear pass away. Let the pulse of our souls beat in joy and praise! God is no dim mystery to us; we have experienced his loving kindness over and over again. He has delivered us from the burden of our sins; He has con-

soled us in the time of our need and suffering; He has been with us as our strength was failing us; He has filled us with the sweetness of His Presence. Let our Sanctus then be a true Sanctus—a shout of joy and praise to the God of our love. God has given us the right to love and praise Him, to sing of His holiness in unstinted measure. The angels sing of Him; but we are nearer to Him than the angels, for them He never redeemed nor does He wear their nature. The Incarnate God is in a very special sense *our* God, nor is He “ashamed to be called our God.” We have part not only in the angelic Sanctus but in that other song which is not of the angels, that “new song” which the redeemed sing, saying, “Thou art worthy—for thou wast slain and didst purchase us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and madest us unto God a kingdom and priests; and we shall reign on the earth.” Let joy then be the prevailing note in our souls as we go on in our service and expect the coming of our King. Let it be the joy of those who are in the presence of the Holiness of God. Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of Hosts.

Let us, then, pray,

For hearts purified by penitence and uplifted in joy that we may worthily take our part in the heavenly chorus of praise. Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus.

O God, who by thine only begotten Son hast overcome death, and opened to us the gate of everlasting life, bring us to the society of heavenly joys, that those who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, may be enabled by Thee to enter into Thy Kingdom; through Thy Son, who riseth from the dead, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

THE SANCTUS

With the Sanctus the whole Church is revealed to be united in the worship of the Blessed Trinity. For us, as for St. John, the doors of heaven swing back and we see the throne and Him that sits thereon, we see the Lamb as it had been slain, we see the Elders and the living creatures and all the hosts of the angels. Then we hear the chant go up, the chant that ceases not day nor night, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was and is and is to come." In this the Church on earth joins and there, too, as the day breaks and the darkness flees in every land the ceaseless Sanctus is echoed from faithful hearts and merged in the song of the heavenly hosts.

The holiness of God,—how the world needs that! The note of awe and reverence that is the indication of our perception of the divine holiness is so lacking in the modern world. Our current notions of God have been gradually emptied of precisely those elements which are calculated to inspire an attitude of humility and adoration such as is involved in a recognition of the creature's relation to the Creator. The movement of thought in the last centuries has been in the direction of emphasizing the dignity and importance of man, and of inducing the impression that God must be rather proud of him and of his achievements. We are puffed up with what we have learned about the universe and forget how little it is in comparison with our ignorance about it. We have so successfully learned to manipulate natural forces that we have gained an overwhelming sense of our own importance in the universe. Vast numbers of men and women in the modern world can no longer understand sin. That

they should not be free to do as they choose, that there should be a will of God which they are bound to seek and obey, is incredible to them. These people are not atheists; they have not repudiated the Christian religion, but they have been led by their education and environment to an attitude of mind which is utterly unchristian and especially so in its failure to conceive God as supreme power and holiness.

It is this latter attitude which we need to cultivate and which the worship of the Christian Church ought to cultivate. But it can only cultivate it as it reflects the worship of heaven, as it tries to produce an awful sense of the divine Presence. No adequate notion of God can be produced by the vulgar and banal services with which it is sought to attract men to the Church of God, or what passes for such. I am not thinking of the antics of the popular Protestant mountebank but of the type of service which is called popular, yet there seems small evidence that it actually is so. To take up one element in such services, the singing of "popular hymns." Can anything be further removed from reality than a mixed congregation singing, or rather howling, such hymns as "Jesus, Lover of my soul" or "Onward, Christian soldiers." No doubt a certain crowd enthusiasm can be created in this way, but it is an enthusiasm for nothing in particular, certainly not for Christian reality, and vanishes as soon as it is created. There is involved in such an attitude as is implied in these "efforts to reach the people" the old problem as to whether the Church should give people what they want or teach people what the Church has to give. The problem would seem simple of solution, but apparently many miss the solution.

Certainly whatever else may result from the popularization of religion it is not a deepening sense of the holiness of God. The attitude of patriarchs and prophets, of psalmists and apostles, of martyrs and saints, is far from that of the modern world. But is it possible to have any depth in religion without a corresponding depth in our conception of God? Is not in fact our religion the outcome of our conception of God? Is the one chief cause of our spiritual weakness that we so often understand the essence of religion to be an imposed law and not a relation to a Person? The holiness of God is the ground of our attempt to attain personal holiness, and if we do not value the divine holiness we shall not feel that holiness is important for us.

It is the holiness of God, His apartness from evil, that is held before us as the ground of our seeking for perfection. "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." When we consider what our religion essentially is we find that it is a growth into the divine likeness. A priest finds himself constantly compelled to resist, in those whom he is trying to guide, a wholly inadequate conception of the meaning of religion. This conception is that a sufficient religion is one of human imitation. Its ideal is not the holiness of God, but the goodness of man, and by goodness is meant simply kindly good nature. The highest ideal is that of the philanthropist who busies himself in helping others. This ideal, no doubt, has great social value, but it has no necessary religious value. Christian philanthropy grows out of the desire not to make men comfortable, but to make them more godlike, to put them in the way of becoming the children of God, united to Him in the life of His grace. This means more than philanthropy (though it includes all that philanthropy

stands for), it means a search for spiritual values as well as for temporal. It means that the Christian life is the life of the broadest reach, which is the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

The vocation of the Christian is not a vocation to goodness in the sense of philanthropy but a vocation to holiness or perfection. Our Lord sums up His teaching, "Be ye therefore perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." And so commonplace was this notion of a Christian vocation that the first generation of Christians are commonly spoken of in the New Testament as the saints. They are holy in vocation—"called with an holy calling"—and in so far as they were faithful were in the way of realization of that ideal. They were called what they were striving to become and hoped to become. The New Testament writers look upon those whom they address in terms of their election rather than in terms of their general attainment. They might be, in fact were, far enough from having attained, but there was no doubt of their ultimate attainment if they were faithful to the grace of God.

We have a way of assuming that the changes which have taken place in the social order of the centuries which lie between us and the first preaching of the Gospel have radically changed the nature of the spiritual problems wherewith we have to deal. That is very far from being the fact. Our problems are essentially the same as those with which the disciples of St. Paul were confronted. Human nature has not changed and the will of God has not changed. Nor would it seem that the problems of a man or woman in New York or London are more complex or more difficult than those of a man or woman in Ephesus or Corinth or Rome in the first cen-

tury. They, as we, found themselves in relation to a set of social conventions which were radically opposed to the principles of Christian living. Where we do differ is in the fact that the conventions with which our life is in contact in the modern world are conventions imposed by a society which is still nominally Christian, whereas the converts of St. Paul in Ephesus were confronted with the conventions of a society which was heathen. This is a difficulty from which the exit seems to be through the explicit recognition that the Western world to-day is not Christian, but anti-Christian in its assumptions and conventions, and that the recognition of this fact is the first requisite of spiritual progress. The anti-Christian character of our civilization is not altered by the fact that possibly a majority of the population still call themselves Christian. They can continue to do so because they have forgotten or never knew what Christianity is. The whole modern world is to-day profoundly ignorant of the meaning of the Christian religion, and none more so than many of those who are convinced that they are teaching Christianity.

The proof of this statement is plain and easy. It is found in the reaction of the average man from the New Testament presentation of religion. According to that precedent a Christian is called to be a saint, that is, to practice a supernatural life which embodies the virtues stated in the Beatitudes, to be humble and pure and peaceable and so on. He is to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. That he may be enabled to do this he is endowed with grace, that is, he is regenerated in baptism and made a partaker of the divine nature. He is given the Holy Spirit and therewith endowed with

supernatural virtues which are the creation of that Spirit. He is a member of Christ, of the mystical Christ which is composed of Christ the Head and of those who are baptised into Him, His members. His central interest is the cultivation of holiness in the fear of God. He has the mind of Christ and his conversation is in heaven.

This is a rough conspectus of the essential elements of the Christian life. Can it be for a moment contended that it is in any degree the meaning of the Christian life as held by the so-called Christian world? Surely no one can so contend. Notwithstanding our present confusion of values there is as marked a division between the social life of to-day and the ideal of life which is presented by the New Testament, as there was when St. Paul preached in Ephesus and Athens. I do not see that it is possible for any one to seek successfully to follow the Gospel ideals until he realises this. The world is just where and what it has always been and its character has not changed because we have gained the habit of calling it "a Christian world." Instead of trying to confuse the issue and blur the line which divides the world and the Church we ought sharply to define the issue and make the line unmistakable. It was done in the first century and it can be done in the twentieth. Unless it is done we shall make no spiritual progress, but go on in the present muddled condition in which the average man and woman are unable to see that there is any difference between God and mammon and impartially worship both. The man who is found at service in church on Sunday morning and drinking cocktails at the country club in the afternoon and playing bridge and dancing in the evening is so hopelessly confusing values that the true meaning of Christianity will of necessity be negligible. No doubt he is not very much to blame. He

is a helpless unit in a social order which has drifted so far from the shores of the Kingdom of God that it has forgotten what they look like.

The end of religion is the vision of God. Holiness is the medium of that vision—"holiness without which no man may see the Lord"—and we who are travelling along the Pilgrim Way go hopefully with our eyes fixed on the distance where will be revealed to us the vision. The Pilgrim Way is one upon which it is well to have a minimum of baggage, and that only of the most essential character. We must select with care our companions and our provisions for the way. We want only those friends who will be permanent and those treasures which will abide with us forever. There is no mystery about either. It is quite clear to us if we care to define it what things are hindrances and what things are helps in the development of our spirit. The preliminary discipline no doubt involves a certain difficulty, but it is not a difficulty of knowledge, but a difficulty of action, the difficulty of acting upon knowledge. In the discipline of the Christian life I suspect that the ultimate difficulty is the difficulty of acting upon knowledge, of wanting what we know that we ought to want. We ought to want the holiness that we are called to and in theory we do want it, but our wanting lacks energy, and that it may well be because our conception of the meaning of holiness lacks content. Is it not perhaps one of the very chiefest difficulties of the Christian religion that we cannot know what it is really like from the outside—"taste and see how gracious the Lord is"? Yes, but where is the impulse to taste to come from—"he that doeth the will shall know of the doctrine"—but whence is the impulse to will to arise?

It is precisely this will, this impulse, which is one of the great secrets of the spiritual life. There is a divine will pressing upon every one of us, a divine impulse seeking to direct life, a voice of the Spirit eager to make itself heard. In theological language, God offers grace, preventient grace, to each one of us. The grace is present to our lives. In it God is calling, urging, impelling us toward the acceptance of Himself. Why, then, am I not actually impelled? Because the impulse is not compulsive, it is an offer, not an irresistible force. How am I to know it? I know it in what I recognise as the best and highest of which my life is at present capable. Is there not before every life a better which it has not yet attained, which it has not even tried to attain? That better is the offer of God. Back of it is the strength of God. Give yourself to it and you will find God. But you will probably not find Him if you decline to act on what you know and decline to go as far as you can see. More is given to him who uses what is already given.

"Be ye therefore perfect." The obligation to strive for perfection is universal and absolute. The common process of minimising religion is in fact the abandonment of religion. To reduce religious practice to its lowest terms, to the performance of certain acts which are regarded as essential and to decline any further practice, grudgingly to give God a certain modicum of service and to reserve the rest of life for self and the world indicates a lack of appreciation of the meaning of the Christian vocation which is fatal to any sort of spiritual development. Whatever limitation there may be on the nature and extent of our pursuit of holiness must be limitation imposed not by our choice, but by the provi-

dence of God. It is in the nature of the case that all men cannot seek holiness with the same energy and fulness of self-surrender. Men differ in the time at their disposal and in intellectual ability. They are handicapped by heredity and education. One man's opportunities have enabled him to see further into the meaning of things spiritual than is possible for another. One man's time is freer for him to dispose of than another's. These things constitute difference of opportunity. They do not constitute difference of vocation. It is not true that because one man's opportunity, whether physical or mental, has reduced his possibility of spiritual accomplishment to a low degree that therefore there is a minimum religion that anyone, whatever his opportunity, is free to seek. I am bound to aim at what the providence of God has placed within my reach, and especially is this true of those whose belief and boast are that they have the privilege of knowing the whole Catholic faith. The very assertion of privilege is at the same time an assertion of obligation. It is well to recall that our Lord said to the Pharisees: "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

The laxity of ill-instructed or half-instructed people is one thing. In our special circumstances we are thrown in with many who through the indifference of the Church in the matter of training its priests and enforcing its discipline are almost wholly ignorant of religious obligations, to whom the sacraments mean nothing more than a badge of Church membership, outward and visible signs without inward and spiritual grace, or else observances which those who are "very particular" make a point of using. They are not ill-meaning people, but people whom the neglect of the Church has left at a serious disadvan-

tage. Their laxity one finds it possible to understand and tolerate. What is incomprehensible and intolerable is the laxity of Catholics who are definite in their profession of the Catholic faith, who have no hesitation in criticising those whose beliefs differ from theirs and yet are obviously not making the most of opportunity in pursuing with energy the ends of the Catholic life, who constantly minimise their religious observations in the interests of pleasure, who regard the call of the spiritual life to a serious degree of self-denial and hardness as an offense. The Catholic revival in the Anglican Church has produced in a considerable number of individuals a type of mind which is utterly unintelligible. This type regards Rome as the standard in all things and in practice picks out in the Roman Church for imitation precisely those things which an educated Roman Catholic regrets and condemns. The devotional literature of the Roman Church is wonderfully rich and beautiful; it embodies the ripe experience of generations of saints and is worthy of our deepest study. It is hardly possible to say as much of the religious practices common among the Irish and Italian peasantry. Yet it is the latter standard, which the Roman Church has perforce to tolerate (though not to approve) that a certain section of Anglo-Catholics choose for imitation.

In minimising religious practice in the interests of freedom for as much of the world as possible obviously has no defense. A minimising religious practice which is the result of the feeling that "it is enough" to do so and so, lacks the element of generosity. Surely when we meditate upon the generosity of God our Saviour who "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich," we are

shamed out of the attitude, if not driven from it on any other grounds. Our Lord loved us and gave Himself for us. We can hardly want to do less than that, hardly look on anything less than entire self-giving, as an adequate response to His action for us. We have not to think very far or very seriously to see that the pursuit of perfection is not a minimum imposed but the natural response of man to the love of God. "I press on" must be the motto of every serious Christian, and the Christian whose self-examination to-day shows him that he has settled down into a rut satisfied with a certain minimum of practice and who is not in the least contemplating any effort to advance, cannot but see that his religion has not only a minimum of practice but a minimum of vitality, that it is seriously in danger of expiring from heart failure. Wherever we are out beyond us is the vision, the vision of Jesus crucified and ascended, the vision of the Head of the Body, Who is the Center of the worship of the heavenly world "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts," rises the eternal chant. What have we, members of the mystical Christ, to contribute to the worship of our Head? Face to face with reality a minimised religion is self-condemned.

"This is a theory, an ideal," I hear it said, "but when brought to the test of practical life in the arena of to-day is it really possible?" One can only say that if it is not possible, then the Christian religion is not possible. For the proposed minimised "practical" religion is not the religion of Christ, as that religion is taught in the New Testament and handed down in the Christian Church. As to its possibility, two things are to be said. The first is that this theory of the Christian life which I have been attempting to set out is not a mere untested theory,

a dream, beautiful if you will, but still a dream; it belongs rather to the realm of reality. It is the everyday practice of multitudes of Christians. It is the practice which has made saints, and the success and justification of the theory is the history of the spiritual life of the Christian Church. The Christian Church has not produced a few hundred saints whose names are in the calendar and in addition an unnumbered multitude of "ordinary Christians" who pursue their own simple, minimising way—saints whom we can view with admiration from afar, minimisers whom we can imitate with a comfortable sense of our "common humanity"—no, the tides of sanctity have run high and deep in the history of the Church and the saints are not few but "a great multitude whom no man can number."

And the other thing to be noted is this: that the grace of God is at the disposal of every man. God has not merely said in a voice of command, "be ye therefore holy, for I the Lord your God am holy," but He has provided the instruments of holiness. The Christian religion is an intensely practical religion and a religion of absolute clearness. Those at any rate who hold to the Catholic tradition can have no doubt as to what they ought to do to be saved and to grow up into the perfect man. The means of sanctification which are provided by the Christian Church are abundant and manifold. There is no more profitable or interesting study than the study of the way in which the Church of Christ has met the needs of men seeking sanctity in the development of its spiritual practice. It has not only the sacraments ordained by our Lord, but it provides a marvelous system of devotions fitted to all our needs.

We have no time to go into the details of these prac-

tices and helps to sanctification here. Every practising Catholic will know of them and be familiar with the use of them. I am more concerned with the principle underlying them than with the detail. The use of devotions is to provide the life with means of constant spiritual contact. The form of worship, the offering of the one Sacrifice is the center and essential point of contact, the constant means of retaining and vivifying our union with our Blessed Lord. But it has been found desirable and helpful in order to keep our light of the spirit burning clear and bright to have special means of spiritual action which are available at all times and in all places. The average man or woman is not a spiritual genius and needs to be helped in the performance of spiritual acts. The Reformation taught that material acts as the means of grace were unspiritual and ignored them or swept them away and the result was, wherever that theory prevailed, increasing spiritual barrenness. Our weakness in spiritual action is largely due to a failure to translate belief into action. It is not to-day so much that the modern man disbelieves as that he does not know what to do with his belief. How many members of the Church there are who never get beyond routine prayer and the occasional reception of the Holy Communion. That can hardly be considered an adequate expression of the life of Christ which is in us, and that souls stop at that low level in the spiritual scale is due not so much to unbelief and indifference as to spiritual clumsiness. They do not go any further because they do not know how.

In other words, they have never been taught to translate their faith into action. To take a single instance they believe that God became incarnate, that Jesus Christ is very God and very Man, they pray to Him, they believe

that in some sense He is present in the Sacrament of the altar. There they stop. "But that is the great thing, to make one's communion," you say. Undoubtedly. But the question now is of the possibility of further actualising and vivifying our faith in the presence of our Lord—not simply thinking about it from time to time, but using it. We use it in sacramental devotions. Perhaps it is possible for us to be present at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Perhaps what we can do is to go to a church where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. There is the test of the actuality of our belief in the Catholic doctrine of the Presence, but it is more than that. It is the translation of that belief into action and into an action that does not depend so much on time and circumstance as on will. We can take up our eucharistic life wherever and whenever we can reach the Tabernacle and we can find there the ministry of grace.

We find there too the possibility of the expression of worship. As the hosts of heaven never cease to cry Holy, holy, holy, so we on earth may take up the cry and join ourselves to the worship, though we are but kneeling silent and alone before the Tabernacle. The God Who is the center and object of the worship of heaven before Whom angels and archangels bow in adoration is here in the hidden presence of the Tabernacle, and we before Him kneeling with angels and archangels raise the same undying *Sanctus*.

THE TWENTIETH MEDITATION
THE BENEDICTUS

The *Benedictus qui venit*, which is the second half of the *Sanctus*, has been missing from our Mass since the appearance of that most Protestant version of the Prayer Book, the one of 1552. The words, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest," are a direct quotation from the Bible (Matt. xxi, 9), being the greeting of the multitude to our Lord on his entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. They have been in the Mass since primitive days. Their obvious significance, as a joyful cry of greeting and welcome to Jesus Christ about to come down upon the altar at the words of consecration, was the cause of their elimination in 1552. Our proposed revision restores them. It has been customary in some churches for the choir to delay the singing of the *Benedictus* until the words of consecration have been said. This, however, is improper. The *Benedictus* is a part of the *Sanctus* and should be both said and sung accordingly.

Let us listen to the words of the Multitude:

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:
Hosanna in the highest!

Let us picture:

OUR Lord's entry into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday. Jerusalem is thronged with the great crowds of the Passover Pilgrims who have come from all countries to keep the feast. Many of them are filled with expectancy. The Messianic hope is vivid and widespread among them. It would not in the least seem strange to them if the report should run that the Messiah had come. Any voice of a trumpet, any shout of a crowd, might herald the King of David's line bringing deliverance. Among certain groups indeed there were rumours that the Messiah had actually come and was about to reveal himself. There was talk of a prophet who spake as never man spake, and who had been active in Galilee for some time past. There were stories current of his appearance in Jerusalem and of wonderful miracles that he had wrought. There was in particular one story that had spread rapidly of his having but now recalled to life one who had been three days dead. It was in ground so prepared that the report fell that this new prophet—this possible Messiah—was approaching the city. A procession was indeed approaching the city gates leading the Galilean Teacher. Many spread their garments before him; others broke down branches from

the trees and spread them in the way. Others went before him waving Palm branches. The air was filled with jubilant hosannas. But as the crowd surged out from Jerusalem to meet the on-coming procession, those who were filled with Messianic expectancy must have been taken aback by the appearance of the heralded King. Their minds were too saturated with the thoughts of the conquering Messiah to remember the prophetic description of him: "Lowly, and riding upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass." So the crowd melts away, disappointed; and the hour of Jerusalem's possible triumph strikes unheeded.

Consider, first,

How constantly God disappoints the expectancy of man. Man's expectancy of what God is and will do falls in most instances quite wide of the fact. The ultimate reason would seem to be a failure on man's part to apprehend the humility of God. Men take the truth that God reveals and straightway by an exercise of the imagination transform it into another thing. They took the promise of God to come and be their true King, and imagined all the ways in which it seemed possible that a king should come—as conquering hero, as leader of Israel's hosts against their enemies, as visible God rending the heavens and destroying His adversaries—and then when God actually came in the humility of Bethlehem, in the hiddenness of Nazareth, in the poverty of the wandering teacher, in the defeat of Calvary, they were unable to recognise Him as God at all. The manifestation so cut across all their preconceived ideas and rooted prejudices that they were blinded to the unveiling of the divine form in the Resurrection and the Ascension. If

our Lord's earthly life had opened with a manifestation of His divinity parallel to His resurrection from the dead, if He had descended openly from heaven as He ascended into it, He might have attracted the obedience of those of whose thoughts He would then have been the fulfilment. But they would not understand God except in terms of their own imagination of what He ought to be and do. They were no doubt familiar with the prophecy of Zechariah, but the feature of it that controlled their thought was that of the King rather than that of His meekness and lowliness. One meek and lowly, riding on an ass and surrounded by a shouting crowd of common people, unrecognised by national authorities, displaying no visible power adequate to conquer the enemies of Israel, fulfilled no expectancy of theirs. There was no comeliness in Him that they should desire Him; and therefore their day passed and the hour of their downfall and rejection struck. The divine attempt to gather them was frustrated by their obstinate adherence to their own imagination as to what was fitting for Israel's king.

Consider, second,

That this is one of our constant experiences: we ever attempt to impose our thought on God rather than humbly try, with unprejudiced minds, to find what is God's thought for us. Even to-day men approach the great truths of Christianity, their minds embedded in a great mass of prejudices which they take for certain truth and make the criterion of their judgment of the revelation of God. Such great facts as the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, the Ascension, are rejected, not because there is lack of evidence of their truth but because a certain theory of the natural world is held into which they

seemingly will not fit. God *must* act in ways that we have imagined or we will have none of him! Is not that true more often than we like to think in our personal dealing with the truths of the Catholic faith, and more especially, with the demands of the Catholic life? This or that belief or practice is proposed to us and is found difficult of adjustment to our well-settled routine of belief and practice. It cannot be true, we think, because it is strange to us, because the adoption of it will work havoc in the accustomed order of our lives. Or frequently it is some dealing of divine Providence with us which, because it crosses our wills, we resent as unjust and undeserved and decline to learn the lessons it contains or profit by the discipline it offers. It is a difficult business so to adjust life that it shall always be open to the approach of God, always ready to greet Him in what ever guise He comes; to be always in expectancy for some new presentment of the divine will, some new offer of the divine grace. Have we at all learned the secret of the humility of God, that God always presents Himself to us in the silent ministry to the needs of our spiritual growth? That God still comes, meek and lowly, in the hiddenness of the sacraments in the daily ministries of Providence; and that our true spiritual insight is shown by our recognition of Him in His hidden life?

Let us pray,

For spiritual insight to recognise our King in whatever form He presents himself. Pray to get rid of the pride of self-conceit, and for the humility that can recognise a humble God.

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of Thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus

Christ, to take upon Him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the Cross, that all mankind should follow the example of His great humility; mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of His patience, and also be made partakers of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE BENEDICTUS

With the Benedictus we have the sense of the nearer approach of the Victim who is also the Conqueror. We close our eyes and see the road that leads out from Jerusalem to Calvary. It is no longer the joyous procession that came into the city a few days ago with its strewn flowers and shouts of triumph. It is a silent procession that goes out to the place that is called Calvary. There is a Victim bowed and falling under the weight of the cross, there are indifferent soldiers and exulting priests who accompany. There is the curious crowd lining the road and from that crowd one imagines there look out faces here and there which are tense with an interest that is not curiosity. Mingled in the multitude will be followers of Jesus, men and women who have listened to His preaching, have seen His miracles, have perhaps experienced them and have put all their trust in Him. They look on as those whose hopes have met with overwhelming catastrophe. It may be there are some of the apostolic band who have gained courage enough to come and see what the end will be. Certainly we know somewhere along the road there is a group of women weeping, somewhere a beloved disciple is leading the stricken mother out to the place where the cross is waiting on the ground. Silent, on the whole, one pictures it. Silent,

so far as men are concerned. There are no hosannas on the lips of the onlookers, but if we listen we can hear, can we not, voices in heaven where the angels watch the unfolding of the last act of the mystery they have eagerly looked into, heavenly hosannas which greet the triumph of the Christ of God.

We on earth kneeling at the Mass, we who are familiar with the fulfilled mystery, we still, though we kneel day by day, have the awe of the mystery's approach upon us. In a moment we are to enter upon the transaction of Calvary, in a moment we are to join in the offering of the sacrifice. We see the Cross ready and hear the approach of the Victim. We know that presently the bread and the wine will become the Body and the Blood and that the very Victim will be revealed upon the altar. We bow our heads and murmur our Blessed, knowing that the crucifixion passes into the triumph and that we shall add "Hosanna in the Highest." For us every sacrifice ends in triumph, before our eyes is unveiled the consummation where the ascended Victim and Conqueror stands in the midst of the adoration of the heavenly hosts and abides forever the source and mediator of all our grace. For from the crucified and glorified humanity grace pours through all the members of the mystical Body and its vivifying stream reaches even here to us. Hosanna in the Highest!

This is the hour which men looked to through the centuries. This is the hour they prayed for with pitiful heart cries. "O that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence." So they cried. So they longed for the fulfilment of the promise. It is so tragic as we listen to their cries across the years. What pathos there

is in that cry of the prophet: "Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? are they restrained? Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting." But to us the fullness of the promise has come. We are the heirs of all the past, the inheritors of all the promises; we no longer look to the future, in faith hoping and waiting. Here before the altar we gather together to take part in the one Sacrifice, to offer Jesus Christ for ourselves and for all our brethren. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.

When the prophet thought of the coming of the King he thought of the preparation which was necessary in view of His coming. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain." The same thought comes to us now. The King draws near, in a moment the mystical Presence will be accomplished. What sort of a person am I who kneel here waiting? Have I prepared in the desert a highway; have the mountains been made low and the rough places plain? It is the supreme privilege of the universe that I am here to share in, which I have just asserted that I share with angels and archangels. But also it is the supreme test of my life. It is not that by any effort of my own that I am or can be "worthy" of the gift of God, that I can show my appreciation of the nature and the greatness of the gift by preparing myself with care to receive it.

I am not thinking here so much of the personal preparation for communion which we all make, or the preparation of sacramental confession which we make if we find as the result of our self-examination that we need it. I am rather thinking of an ultimate attitude toward life which is the test of the very nature of our Christianity and our grasp on the meaning of Christ. I have touched on this before, and particularly in the last meditation, but I feel that it is so profoundly important as involving in its final analysis all that we understand Christianity to be that I venture to return to it once more.

We cannot but feel in the midst of the complex social order in which we find ourselves that there is constant friction between the Christian ideal as embodied in the New Testament and the course of our daily life. It is not so much that this or that social institution or convention raises a difficulty as that the ideals of present day society and the ideals of Christianity are in acute opposition. We cannot but feel that the Christian life under these conditions is a constant compromise, and compromise we feel is an unworthy mode of life.

A commonplace Christianity seeking easy adjustment to the world says, "Why be so stiff? These people whom you see about you are good Christian people and members of the Church. It cannot be that they are all wrong. Why set up a standard of conduct which obviously does not work and which good people and Church members do not think of adopting? You merely make yourself peculiar and get nowhere. Your only result is unpopularity and isolation. Let us admit that our life is not the life described in the New Testament, but neither is America Palestine nor the twentieth century the first."

All that is specious—and unsatisfactory: for the question involved and the resultant action is not a matter of superficial difference but of the essence of religion. To bring it squarely to the test our Lord says, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." And we say that we can—and will.

S. John states the case with his usual uncompromising definiteness: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." We cannot wave that aside with the usual remark that times have changed. They have not essentially changed. No one with his eyes open can for a moment deny that the essence of the social situation is precisely the same to-day as it was when S. John wrote. It is imperative that we face this. Otherwise our hosannas are quite empty words. Otherwise we are in the idle and hostile crowd that lines the way by the Cross.

"All that is in the world"—let us try to put it in more modern terms. All that is in the world, the desire for sensuous gratification, the desire for intellectual gratification, the desire to express one's self, the longing for notoriety, is not of the Father, but of the world. Now it is noteworthy that S. John does not pause to discuss in any detail the nature of these things or wherein their evil exists. He simply notes their transient character "the world passeth away."

It would therefore seem that much of our inquiry as to just wherein consists the evil of these things, our attempt

to weigh and measure pleasure and ambition and sensuous gratification, nicely to determine just how much of these a Christian may have and just how far a man may go with them and still retain his Christian character and not belie his confession, is utterly beside the mark. The point about them is that they are transient. "The world passeth." And that is an undeniable fact on any theory of life. Whether you are material or spiritual in your ideals, whether you are devoted to the world or attempt to live as those who use without abusing it, you can only abuse or use it for a strictly limited period.—*it passeth.*

St. John's argument, so to call it, rests upon the incompatibility of two loves, the love of the world and the love of the Father. I think there is small room for discussion as to that. The theory that you can love the world some and the Father some is negligible. And the common-sense ground of choice, if there were no other, is that the world passeth and the Father remaineth. It is the folly of tying one's self to that which is transitory. It is not necessarily that in all their manifestations and uses these things are to be abandoned, but the life is not to be attached to them, but is to find its significance and center elsewhere, in the permanence of the Father's will. "He that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

Whenever we push in life to its deepest and therefore to its truest meaning we find that its attachment is to the one or the other of these, the world or the Father, to the passing or the eternal. For our present purpose we are concerned not with the results of attachment to the temporary, but with attachment to the Father and His will. This is an attachment which is capable of growing depth and strength. In a growing spiritual life one sees a good will and fundamental choice which is accompanied

with a more or less decided turning away from the world to God. We commonly call this process conversion. This is the work of divine grace and is increased and strengthened by our constant reception of grace, that is, of the divine humanity of our Lord, in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar.

We can therefore describe the conversion of the soul from one aspect of it as the increase of that presence of God in the soul which we call sanctifying grace, and from the other as the increased response of our soul to the leading of that grace. We can think of it with obvious reserves as the coming of our Lord more and more into our souls, or we can think of it as our yielding ourselves more and more to His guidance. But in either case we do well to emphasize our sense of the approach which the Eucharist involves and requires of those who would receive its benefits.

We naturally are suspicious of any sort of emotionalism and rightly decline to judge spiritual acts by their emotional reactions. On the other hand with our mixed nature we are entitled to look for some translation of spiritual reality into stirred emotion. It is quite true that the test of the love of God is not feeling but action, —“If ye love me keep my commandments.” At the same time we should hesitate about the reality of a love that never feels. Human love is a profound emotion and there can be small meaning in the selection of that word to indicate our deepest relation to God and the supreme virtue of the Christian life if it is to be understood as purely intellectual and no emotion is ever to be looked for.

And in fact the love of God does constantly make itself known emotionally, though in different degrees in natures differently constituted. One of our surest grounds

for our belief in the existence of God and of His nature lies in our perception of the beauty of the world as a partial revelation of an ultimate beauty, and the perception of beauty is not by any means a purely intellectual act. It is much more an emotion. For me, at least, it is an increasing revelation of the meaning of God, this sheer beauty of the world. I feel an inrush of the divine presence, a nearness of the divine life, and this is not pantheism, as in Wordsworth's well-known lines. It is to me the knowledge (I cannot call it less than that) reaching me through a sense that I have no word to describe. I see the glory of the world that is all about me, the glory of sea and sky, of mountain and plain, I hear the murmur of the wind in the pines and the ripple of the brook in the valley :

Often the western wind has sung to me,
There have been voices in the streams and meres,
And pitiful trees have told me, God, of Thee:
And I heard not. Oh! open Thou mine ears.

The reeds have whispered low as I passed by,
“Be strong, O friend, be strong, put off vain fears,
Vex not thy soul with doubts, God cannot lie”;
And I heard not. Oh! open Thou mine ears.

There have been many stars to guide my feet,
Often the delicate moon, hearing my sighs,
Has rent the clouds and shown a silver street;
And I saw not. Oh! open Thou mine eyes.

Angels have beckoned me unceasingly,
And walked with me; and from the somber skies
Dear Christ Himself has stretched out hands to me;
And I saw not. Oh! open Thou mine eyes.

Beyond all that there is a message that reaches me through my senses. For in addition to the message which they bring which tells me of the very presence of God, this power of perception, so to call it, can be cultivated and sharpened like any other mental power. It can also be stupefied and deadened. We can train the ear to distinguish the various parts of the instruments in an orchestra; we can train the eye to distinguish the various shades of color in a landscape which at first impresses us as a monotony of green; and we can train the soul, for that must be the organ of vision, to perceive the presence of God in the beauty of the world, to feel His love in the peace of the twilight, His majesty in the fierceness of the storm, His glory in the splendor of the sunset. We know that these are not imaginings and dreams, they have to us realities which have grown and developed constantly with the passing years. The emotion of beauty is as reliable as any other channel of human knowledge. I do not know why we should distrust it any more than any other attribute of our nature. I do not know of any reason why we should not train and discipline it as we train or discipline any other faculty. And what it reveals to us through the perception of the beauty of God is the love of the Father, that love that passeth not away.

But this love of beauty, this certainty of God's Self-presentation, can we find it elsewhere than in His revelation of Himself in nature? Are there other means of approach which this sense interprets to us? Surely, yes. Is it not precisely at this moment in the Mass when the exultation of our adoration in the Sanctus passes into the announcement of the Benedictus that our emotional sense intensifies and vivifies the statements of the liturgy? This sense of imminent approach has been growing con-

stantly with the progress of the Mass. We have been preparing ourselves for a definite event, for a promised divine action. The drama of the Mass unfolds and leads on toward a foreseen point. The individual worshipper is not merely a spectator of a drama enacted before his eyes, he is an actor in the drama. He throws himself into its movement, he is eagerly merged in the advancing tragedy. He unites himself with it in his profession of faith, he purges himself by penitence that he may be worthy to enact his part. He makes himself one with the hosts of heaven in their worship and kneels with expectant heart as the announcement of the approach of the victim Who is his Redeemer comes to him.

How can he fail to find all this presentation of the one Sacrifice profoundly moving? And in it all he is constantly aided by the performance of the Mass itself, whether it be by the stillness and restraint of the low Mass with its murmured words and quiet moments, or by the splendor of the solemn Mass, where complex movement and splendid music interpret the progress of the tragedy. Through it all there is the deliberate appeal to this human quality which we have called the sense of beauty, a sense which is peculiarly accessible to the mystic appeal. And this is as it should be, for that which is acting is the mystical Christ performing the supernatural action which began in the eternal purpose of the Blessed Trinity and abides forever as the sole medium of approach to the unveiled majesty of God. As we, the redeemed people of God, the members of the mystical Christ, kneel in hushed expectancy, we see the heavens opened and the Sacrifice approach, and the temporal things which are seen, the earthly priest and the bread and the wine take on the character of type and symbol,

become the means which the Victim uses to mediate His presence. What we really see now with the intelligence of the spirit is the advent of the King who is also the Sacrifice, who comes that He may be the object of our worship and the Guest of our souls. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!

I suppose when we deal with these matters in this way of ideal presentment we are driven to say that that is true in conception and theory, but that it is only partially true of me. I do try to enter into the action of the Mass, I do try to keep my whole mind intent and alert, I do try to keep my soul open to the sense of the divine approach, but I feel that I only partially succeed. No doubt that is true of all of us; we all feel that. The practical question is, are we to rest content with this partial accomplishment? Are there not ways and means of pushing deeper into spiritual experience?

When one looks squarely at one's spiritual experience, especially at one's experience of the Mass, I am sure that one of the things that our spiritual study brings home to us is the hindrance to spiritual advance that a certain superficiality of effort is. We linger on the surface of the Mass. Do what we will we remain too much in the attitude of spectators and too little in that of actors, whose part for themselves at least is of vital interest. I do not suppose that an aspirant to success upon the stage will show much promise of ultimate achievement unless he shows vivid interest in the earlier parts that are assigned to him. Nor do I suppose that we shall attain spiritual success unless we are interested in what we are doing now and are anxious to do more. To act to the full extent of our present spiritual knowledge and experience is the path to full understanding and accomplishment,

and one cannot help feeling that advance in the experience of the Mass, in the understanding and use of its limitless possibilities is conditioned on our interest and action *where we now are*. I would instance but one form of what I call superficial dealing with the Mass, and that is the ease with which we *throw off the Mass*, the ease with which at the conclusion of Mass we pass to other things and other interests. This passage is necessary, though perhaps not so abruptly as we commonly make it. Considering the necessity of the passage is it not true that we let go of the Mass in a wholly needless way? Would not a little deeper consideration and keener appreciation of the Mass lead us to hold on to it during the day? We have gone to the Mass with some special intention, let us suppose a personal intention, of self-oblation for the gaining of a deeper spiritual experience. Would not the gain in some degree at least be conditioned on our carrying with us throughout the day the intention of the Mass, now become an intention to do what we have asked that we might have the grace to do?

We are kneeling here in expectancy of a coming, but it is the coming of One who has already often come. It is no stranger whom we are expecting to welcome into the house of our soul, but One who has been for years a familiar friend. But the coming One is One the riches of whose friendship we can never exhaust and from whom we look to receive a gift at each new coming. "New every morning is the love," we say, as we kneel awaiting new gifts and graces or an increase of the old ones He comes to distribute, but not automatically. There is need of a certain cooperation on our part. I think there special need that we should know what we want, that we should search our souls and discover our spiritual

poverty. Is it not often that we have little appreciation of our true spiritual needs? We acknowledge our spiritual barrenness and weakness with a sort of unconscious hypocrisy. We kneel and say that we are miserable sinners, we say that the burden of our sins is intolerable, when nothing is less true than that. In cold fact we do not feel that way at all. We are quite certain that we are "rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing," and know not that "we are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." That there can be any grace or any increase of grace for us requires as a preliminary that we get out of this attitude of mind, that we do actually recognise our spiritual poverty and insufficiency, and that that is not a necessary state, but a state that can be corrected by the grace of God, and will be corrected when we want it corrected. We kneel awaiting the consummation of the Sacrifice, then we hear the herald announcing the coming of the King, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." And what shall that coming mean to us? Do we want it to mean anything at all? Have we made clear to ourselves just why we are here this morning? When the cry rang down the highway, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," blind Bartimeus sitting by the wayside began to cry, "Jesus, master, have mercy on me!" And when Jesus came and paused he knew just what he wanted. "Lord, that I may receive my sight." When the rich young ruler came to our Lord he knew just what he wanted, "Good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" But he was not willing to pay the price. Do you know what you want? Not mere vague aspirations after goodness and improvement, but definitely what you want to do. And do you really want it? Are you willing to pay the price? Jesus

of Nazareth is coming ; what do you want of Him ? Why are you here ?

The exhortation to us to watch, to be as those servants who expect their Lord, is not at all confined in its meaning to those who watch for the final coming. Indeed, we can take it as axiomatic of the spiritual life that only those will be found watching for the final coming who have in the course of their lives been accustomed to watch for all comings, ready to welcome the Master of the house whenever and however He presents Himself. Those who constantly resort to the altar needs must acquire this habitual attitude of watchfulness. They are constantly alert to grasp opportunity. For it is true that not only does God give what we want, but He gives more, and other than we have specified that we want. Only here again we must be spiritually alert to seize upon His offer. We approach the altar with our definite desires, but it may be that we shall be privileged to receive some quite unexpected gifts, be summoned to answer some unexpected call.

For that also is true, that the gift of God may be a summons to serve in some special way. How often among the men and women who come to kneel at the altar and receive their Lord as the Guest of their souls, some hear Him speaking some unexpected word, a word which alters the whole course of their lives. They have been summoned to leave all and to follow Him as priests or religious, to go out on foreign missions, to take up difficult service, have been pointed to ways in which they could grow spiritually or suggested means of spiritual improvement. And as there is no doubt that many have been called and have answered and have followed, so there can be no doubt that to many the call has been addressed

and the offer has been made, and they simply have been, not heedless, but unconscious of it. They had not prepared themselves and had not dreamed of any other gift of God than the gift that they themselves had asked for. They have prayed, but they have not listened, they have wanted, but they have not expected so rich gifts, and callings of God have come and have passed and their lives have been poorer and the weaker, because they have not cultivated the virtue of hope. Blessed is He that cometh. And blessed is he who expects the coming and expects that He who comes will abide with him and will leave a blessing behind Him.

THE TWENTY-FIRST MEDITATION
THE PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS

The *Prayer of Humble Access* is not, liturgically speaking, a part of the Mass, but is said by the celebrant on behalf of those about the receive, as part of their "communion devotions." Its first appearance, as we have already noted, was in the *Order of Communion*, published in 1548, which was to be inserted into the Latin Mass immediately before the communion of the people. This position of the communion devotions was retained in the First Prayer Book of Edward VI and in the present liturgy of the Scottish Church. In compiling our American offices Bishop Seabury followed largely the Scottish book in preference to the English. One wishes that he had done so in this matter of the more logical position of the communion devotions.

Listen to the words of the Woman of Canaan:

Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table.

Let us picture:

OUR Lord going on in silence while the woman cries to Him for help. In the scene, as it rises in our imagination, He is walking with His eyes fixed before Him, not even turning to look at her who cries. But she cries on. We still hear the cry, shrill, piercing, insistent: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David!" The Apostles grow impatient with the impatience we all feel with the importunate beggar whom we are unable to help. They appeal to our Lord: "Send her away, for she crieth after us." And again we hear the cry, the cry of one who will at least be answered: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David!" Our Lord's answer seems at once a response to the request of the Apostles and a rebuff to the woman. Her case does not come within the scope of His mission which is "to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." It no doubt satisfied the Apostles if they had any questions in their minds as to why He did not help this woman as He had helped so many others; but it produces no effect on the woman. Indeed, she takes advantage of the pause and comes and throws herself at Jesus' feet with her insistent cry: "Lord, help me!" But the result is to call out a reiteration of our Lord's statement: "It is

not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs." But the need of the woman is too great to be put off with theoretical truth, and it lends her words which break down the reserve of our Lord and force from Him the gift she wants: "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table." So faith wins its victory!

Consider, first,

That our Lord, doubtless, was only waiting till the rising tide of the woman's faith should sweep away the barriers He was placing before it. No doubt His mission had a particular import and imposed a necessary restraint; but it was the sort of restraint that great love and pity would from time to time disregard and overpass at the appeal of some clamoring need. At the same time we recognise in all our Lord's works of healing not simply the impulse of pity yielding to the pressure of presented suffering, but the further motive of embodying permanent lessons in His action. He did not heal any sort of pitiful suffering that He met, but He so governed His work of healing as that it should be a component part of His great work of proclaiming the Kingdom of God. He was not a philanthropist, to whom suffering is an evil to be abolished wherever possible, but the founder of a new order in which suffering would be shown to have a deep significance. Consequently we are not to pass by the miracles of healing as being exhibitions of kindness, but to study them as revelations of one or another aspect of God's relation to us. This woman of Canaan with her insistent appeal which appears at last to wring an unwilling response from our Lord Who save for her urgency would have passed on, becomes to us the symbol

of the power of a certain kind of faith—of the faith which is bidden to persist in the face of all obstacles, to ask till it be answered, to seek till it find, to knock till it be opened unto it. It is the faith that is capable of removing all mountains of doubt and hesitation because it declines to believe that such things can in the end shut it from the love of the Father.

Consider, second,

Is this the sort of faith with which we approach our Lord? Is our faith the untiring, undiscouraged faith that does not believe that the silence of heaven means the rebuff of the petitioners? Is not failure in persistence one of the common failures of the Christian life? When we ask a favor of a human being and are refused we are apt to take the refusal, however well grounded, in a spirit of wounded pride. Is it, perhaps, true that wounded pride is not foreign to our prayers? There is often a point beyond which we decline to go on praying because, as we say, our prayers are useless and unanswered; the door at which we have knocked so long remains closely shut. We turn away disappointed, with grief and, sometimes, one fears, with a touch of resentment. But one great characteristic of the true spirit of prayer is just its humility, *Dominus non sum dignus*. The answer of heaven to our cry must be governed, not by our estimate of our need but by the wisdom and mercy of God. What *we* want as the result of our prayers is just the thing prayed for; what God desires will be the outcome of our prayers is the increase of our faith and trust in Him. Delay or refusal are profitable for us if they beget in us, not the wounded pride that turns away, but the spirit of humble submission and deepening faith

which clings all the closer to God because of his silence, believing that the silence is not the silence of one inattentive but of one who waits for the proper moment in which to swing back the door. Faith is the expression of our relation to our Blessed Lord, and if it be indeed marked with humility, that, with the appreciation of what we are, it will wait patiently for his action without any attempt to force our will on him.

Let us, then, pray,

That our faith may be purified from all taint of self ; that while laying our mind and needs before our Lord, we may so lay them as those who are in perfect submission to His wisdom.

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, who knowest our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking ; We beseech Thee to have compassion on our infirmities ; and those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot, ask, vouchsafe to give us, for the worthiness of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE PRAYER OF HUMBLE ACCESS

As we come face to face with the reality of that which is about to take place we pause for a moment, overwhelmed with the thought of what we ourselves are. We have lifted up our hearts to the heavenly places where Christ sitteth on the right hand of the Father. We have joined in the adoring song of the angels and saints, we have rejoiced in the sense of the near approach of the conquering Victim. And then we think of ourselves and of our unworthiness to offer anything before the Lord, or

to solicit His approach to us. "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?" we say with the Psalmist, and with S. Peter our impulse is to say, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." We feel the necessity of protesting our spiritual poverty and nakedness and incompetency that we have shown in the vocation wherewith we have been called. "We do not presume," we say, "to come to this Thy table."

And this is well, this act of self-recollection, bringing home to us not only what we are but what the act in which we are engaged actually is. It seems a fall from a height, it is actually the concentration of our powers for a further advance. The Mass puts a serious strain on the worshipper who sincerely tries to enter into it. I fancy some dim consciousness of this is at the bottom of the preference that so many people feel for matins. The conviction of the divine presence, of the actual approach of God, is overwhelming and makes restless and uneasy those who are unprepared or unaccustomed to eucharistic worship.

There is no doubt of the spiritual demands of the Mass. From another point of view we meet the objection that it expects too much of the average man. The communion service at which a few select persons are assembled—yes, that is intelligible and desirable; but a Mass at which all sorts of people of all ages and of all degrees of spiritual culture are present, that is exposing holy things to profanation and ought not to be permitted.

One understands the criticism while one believes that it is wholly mistaken. It is the sort of objection that is constantly made under our conditions of Church life, to the introduction of the Mass as the principal service

of the day. "I would like to introduce the mass," a priest says, "but my congregation is unprepared for it, and it will lead to irreverence. They will not recognize the Presence, will not genuflect or make acts of devotion. they must first be prepared." The question may well be raised whether people can be prepared for the Mass without the Mass. We can talk about a matter endlessly and not get very far, whereas the practice that is proposd will soon do its own educating. Reverence is no doubt a most desirable thing, but an absence of acts of reverence may not spell irreverence, but ignorance, or even a nervous shrinking from the unaccustomed. And in any case we have no real choice if we are Catholics but to teach and practise the full Catholic faith and worship, and inasmuch as our own formularies assume that the Mass is the chief service on Sunday there is nothing for us to do but to go ahead.

In the matter of irreverence I think one may assume that there will be almost no conscious irreverence. There will be an absence of external recognition of the Presence which is an unconscious irreverence, but our Lord when He was on earth did not shrink from the crowd because they did not do Him reverence. He mixed fully with human beings whatever might be their attitude toward Him. We never hear of Him withdrawing Himself because He felt that His dignity was not being recognized adequately. He accepted criticism quite as a matter of course as a necessary part of His mission. He submitted to be called a gluttonous man and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. By contact with life as He found it He won men to Himself. He "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

And this servant form, this absence of outward glory abides as the form of His manifestation to-day. In the sacrament of the altar it is only an enlightened faith that can see beyond the bread and the wine to the Body and Blood of which they are the vehicles. It is only a faith trained and disciplined which can see in the tabernacle the hidden presence. But an intelligent and trained faith can be easier acquired through sacramental practice than through mere sacramental teaching. It is doubtful if the mass of people can be brought to an understanding of our Lord's presence in the sacrament except through use. Anyone who has done much teaching knows that the chief difficulty is to effect the passage from the abstract to the concrete, from theory to practice, and the practice alone is an adequate interpretation of theory. The sacrament, whether in the actual celebration of the Mass or in the reserved sacrament should no doubt be treated with all reverence and surrounded with every mark of our deep devotion to our Lord. And then I think our Lord can be left to do His own work. He may still look out from the altar and the tabernacle on many souls careless and unheeding, even on souls antagonistic through the impulse of hostile theory. But He will always look out, will He not? as on sheep who have no shepherd that they recognise. He will still have compassion on the multitude and be eager to feed them with the Bread of immortality, and the Water of life. "His works are wonderful and His ways past finding out." It was to an ignorant and sinful woman that He confided His secret,—"I that speak unto thee am he." Let us

open the way for Him to act upon human souls. That is our sole responsibility.

Spiritual capacity is a quality which has to be deepened through work. I have dwelt again and again on the wonder of our vocation and the need of response to it. I have dwelt on the danger that is involved in taking a light or superficial view of the Christian calling. But there is another side to the medal which we may touch on for a moment without forgetting what has been said to the first side.

Under the conditions of life into which the average American is born and brought up spiritual religion is a difficult thing, and in addition the average man's training and environment give him small capacity for the apprehension of spiritual truth. We cannot expect of average men that they shall have the vision of saints. The saints had to spend most of their time and energy in clarifying the vision and the average man has to spend most of his time and energy quite otherwise. It is perfectly true that he does not spend the time and energy on his religion that he ought, and that we do well to urge him, to spur him on to do more. But in the end he will turn out to be a one-talent servant. Are we therefore to despair and to set up a varying standard of religious obligation? Both attitudes are common enough, but I think both are unnecessary and mistaken. The man is to be carried on as far as he can go and because he cannot go very far in pure theory he will have to be carried on by practice. The saints or the persons with time and training at their disposal can master the intricacies of eucharistic doctrine in a way that is impossible to the average man. It is a vast mistake to treat the average man as a sluggish member of a class who is held back until he can learn his les-

son. What he has not the time or the ability to master in theory he can easily master in practice. Anyone can be taught to act in a special way toward our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. The child who can give no definition at all can yet say his prayers and make acts of faith, hope and charity. He can acquire a simple faith which is of the very essence of his relation to our Lord. A little child entered a church and asked a learned man whom he saw there, "Where is Jesus?" And the learned man did not even know what the child wanted. But the child wanted what he asked for, *Jesus*. To him the presence in the tabernacle was a reality to seek, the object of his prayers. He could talk to Jesus, and simple people and unlearned people can be taught to find the reality of the Sacrament, not through abstruse teaching, but through simple practice. They can be taught to find Jesus in the Mass and the tabernacle and to seek Him there as the object of their devotion. It is desirable but far from necessary that they be able to intellectualise their devotion. The devotion will remain as the essential part of their religion whether it can be stated and defined in theological terms or no.

When all has been said that can be said, we all, learned or simple, come back to the same attitude, the attitude of trusting not to our own learning or righteousness but to the manifold and great mercies of God. We draw near at all because we are assured that His property is always to have mercy. Resting on this conviction we "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." If we have done what we could, if we have repented of our sins and been cleansed by the grace of absolution, if we are conscious of our uprightness of intention to meet the

demands of God upon our lives, we are entitled so to come boldly. The sincere Christian is quite probably overtimid in his religion, and will do well to consider whether such timidity is not in itself an offense against God. We find people who are afraid to ask gifts or graces because, as they say, they are not worthy of them, and people who shrink from making their communions frequently. What is this but a lack of trust? What is this but to treat slightlying the promises of God? There seems to be buried deep, or perhaps not so deep, in each human being a strain of ancestral paganism which manifests itself in the form of a distrust of God, which treats God as one who is looking for an opportunity to do us harm. We know that God wills the good of all men, that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and be saved. We know that "this is the will of God, even our sanctification." "That God sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him." And yet is simple trust in God as One who wishes us good so very common a thing? Is self-committal to the promises of God in expectancy of their fulfilment a common attitude among the mass of Christians? It is well to feel and to acknowledge our own limitations as we do here in the prayer of humble access. It is well to acknowledge and to repent of our sins, but it is not well to stop there with the feeling that we are impossible instruments of the divine use, that we are incapable of that response to the will of God which makes it possible for us to be His sons.

Humility is a Christian virtue, but so is boldness a Christian characteristic. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." There is need of a kind of violence in our religion, if it is to

be a very striking success. "Blessed," says the cynic, "are those who expect nothing, for they shall not be disappointed." But God says, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." There you have two programs of life, the life of indifference to spiritual issues, and the life that is inspired by spiritual values, which knocks at heaven's gate and will not be dismissed unanswered. Only God would dare describe Himself as our Lord describes Him in that parable of the friend at midnight. But as He is so described, we may well take heed and be bold and persistent in our approach to Him. It is not to him who in a false humility waits for gifts of God that they come, but to him who trusts to the promises of God, knocks until the door opens, seeks until he finds.

And what may we expect to find? Ultimately God Himself. If we have understood the search we have entered upon we know that the end is only when we have found God. Here in our approach to the altar we experience it in a special manner, we formulate our desires. Our desire is a eucharistic desire, a desire to "eat the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us."

Could ineffable things be expressed more simply? The desire is like the desire of the child which gives utterance to the desires of the heart in the fewest possible words. And really that is what the Christian religion is, the simple statement of tremendous facts, yet so tremendous that we feel it quite useless to state them otherwise than simply. Complexity will add nothing to our comprehension of them. We desire then through the instrumentality of this sacrament that which is in fact essential Christianity, union with God in Christ, and we desire to be raised to

Christian maturity, to a Christian manhood, to grow up into Christ in all things. We would perhaps best leave it just there, where the prayer leaves it, as a simple aspiration.

But one cannot quite do that because the meaning of this life that we are praying for has been the object of thought for many centuries. If it had been simply a matter of philosophical speculation we need not concern ourselves with it. But it is not the philosophers alone who have concerned themselves with it, but the saints. And because the saints have spent their best efforts in the attempt to make clear to us what they have found the life of union to be, we cannot quite leave it here untouched upon.

And the saints find in the life of union the very essence of the purpose of God for man. They find the true purpose of God in creation was the existence of intelligent beings to whom He could impart Himself. God's love in creation is a self-imparting love. We can almost say that creation reveals God to us as *wanting to grow*, to pour Himself into those through whom His love would find wider manifestation. The incarnation of God is just one more step in this process, one more manifestation of this love of God wanting to bring the self-wounded creature, rescued and healed by Him, to Himself. Under the conditions that sin has imposed on God the mission of Christ is a mission of rescuing, of redeeming love, of the love that seeks and saves the lost. God does not shrink or spare Himself in this work of redemption and after the supreme sacrifice of Christ He does not shrink from what is involved in carrying on the work to the end—His continued rejection through the ingratitude and sinfulness of the creature. “God so loved the world that

he gave his only begotten son." Yes, the form of the Crucified spontaneously rises before us as we read. But also God so loved the world that His work of redemption continues through the centuries, and as we read the priest and the victim of the altar present themselves to our spiritual vision as the fulfilment of the divine purpose.

That we should be one with God, that we should evermore dwell in Him and He in us; that is the purpose, that is the end of all our work, not that we should be good, but that we should be divine and engrafted into Christ. What a vista this opens before us. Christians are told over and over again that they are pessimists, that they condemn human nature and treat it as a degraded thing. But what theory of life is comparable to that of the Catholic? Men talk of progress, but by progress they only mean the accumulation of material goods and increase of skill in the manipulation of natural forces. From the standpoint of materialism men may become more learned, more skilled, better adjusted to environment, they may learn to work out a better social order. But it remains true that as we brought nothing into this world, neither shall we carry anything out. We face a future which we know nothing about. The Catholic sanctifies this life, and lays the foundation for the future. He does not live one life here and look on to another which is without relations which are conceivable with what has gone before. He begins here by entering into a relation with God, a relation which he believes will grow and intensify as the years go on. The next world is the outcome of this world and will be what he has made it to be. Life is one, and this world and the other world are but stages in one life, differing but in the mode of their experience.

Thus the Christian religion enables us to avoid the

horrible chasm which to so many death represents, a break with all that we know and a plunge into an utterly unknown state of being. With us there is no essential break, for the two states form a unity. In each we are in Christ and in each He is our life. That we have faith means that we are certain of this fact of union now and shape our lives in the knowledge of it. It cannot be of course that this knowledge of what we are shall not shape our whole attitude in this world so that we shall use it as not abusing it.

For it is not, this life of union, a state that cannot be forfeited. We can at any moment forfeit our inheritance. We have the awful gift of freedom which is the indispensable condition of moral responsibility. Many, of course, it is unfortunately only too evident, do forfeit their inheritance, do think too little of God's gift to retain or to cultivate it. The lure of the world, the flesh, and the devil fascinates multitudes of souls, but that does not mean that they were not offered better things, and it is not only those who scorn and vilify the Christian religion who forfeit it. The divine life which has been imparted to the soul may be permitted to die and will die through mere neglect. It is not necessary that a soul be forfeited that it plunge into sin. It is only necessary that it treat God and the gifts of God as non-existent.

We are members of His Body and His Flesh and of His Bones. The outcome of this work of God in Christ that we have been considering has been the building up of a body of the mystical Christ. This is a supernatural organism of which Christ is the Head and those who are in Christ are the members. They together form a unity which we call the Holy Catholic Church. Of this Church Jesus Christ is the Head, the Holy Spirit is the soul, we

are members, each with our own function and our own mode of action in the Body. The healthy functioning of the Body as a whole is at any time impeded by the failure of any individual member to function and the member fails healthily to function when it fails to make the will of the Head its rule of life. And when groups of members associate themselves in opposition to the will of the Head, even if such association be ignorant and well-meaning, the health of the Body and the usefulness of its life are sadly impeded. This is what the divisions of Christendom brought about, that the life of the Body cannot function freely and normally. As when through some subtle disease of the physical body the brain ceases to exert its normal control over all the members and their action is no longer coordinated and the usefulness of the body is impaired while yet it still lives, though by a reduced and diminished life, so through the disease of self-will in any member the action of the Body of Christ becomes inharmonious and ill-adjusted to its work. Thus the work of the whole Body suffers. It is not dead, no part of it may be wholly dead, the Holy Spirit, the soul, has not been utterly forfeited, but as a whole the Body is unable to perform its work perfectly, and its mission in the world is set back and hindered. This is what we see to-day, the ineffective functioning of the Body of Christ. Everywhere the Church is suffering from partial paralysis and can present only an imperfect testimony to the truth it is commissioned to teach and can only imperfectly mediate the life of its Head. A divided Christendom torn by internal wars gives offense to the spiritual and occasions to the enemy to blaspheme.

And that which is so unfortunately true of the Christian Body as a whole is also true of each part of the Church

as it exists to-day. One knows that the pathway to truth is often over conquered error, but that does not mean that error is a necessary condition of knowing the truth. The internal divisions and contests of religious bodies to-day are an almost impassable barrier to the teaching of the truth. Not only is one met in one's teaching by the statement that Rome and the Orient teach differently, but one is met by the statement that one's neighbor across the way teaches differently. Christ is for all the practical purposes of the average man at present divided. The plain man cannot see Christ because of the dust raised in the ceaseless contests of His alleged followers.

In the midst of this confusion many fall away. Others the very difficulty of the situation stimulates to spiritual activity. Times of great difficulty and stress are at the same times offers of opportunity. When the country is prosperous and at peace it easily falls a prey to the professional politician and place-hunter. Its rulers are misrulers. But let a danger threaten and the true lover of his country comes forth to the rescue. He finds it no easy task because his way is beset and blocked and his efforts hindered not only by the old enemy, the politician, but by a new crop of friends who sincerely want to help, but only succeed in getting in the way. In his impatience the patriot may conclude that the old place-hunter was a less hindrance and nuisance than the new theorist and sentimentalist. So when in time of difficulty in the life of the Church an attempted reform is made both classes, the place-hunter and the theorist, rush in to complicate the situation. We are to-day beset by both classes, by the worldly person who does not want anything disturbed and cries out at all change from the accustomed, and by the theorist who imagines that a little legislation, the passing

of a new canon, the creation of a new organization or even a change in the order of Evening Prayer, will set the Church on its feet again and make it function healthfully.

One fancies that few of those who are engaged in conducting the fortunes of the Church ever read the history of the Church or indeed ever study the way in which human nature commonly acts. If they did they would know that the ills from which we are suffering are spiritual, and spiritual ills cannot be cured by canons or Prayer Book revisions. The ills from which the Church suffers to-day cannot be cured by abandoning the Catholic Religion for something else. The "something else" may function in its own way admirably, but it will be as a substitute for and not as a reform of the Church of God. The deep-seated ills from which the Church suffers to-day can only be healed by a return to spiritual ideals and methods. In place of the present widespread longing for success in the conduct of an institution we must gain a longing for spiritual insight, an eager desire for perfection. So long as the ideal of spiritual perfection does not appeal it is of small consequence whether "the churches" do or do not succeed in the attainment of whatever ambitions they may have.

Two qualities are specially needed: boldness in stating the truth, and the courage to act upon the truth we have found. Those of us who believe in the Catholic Church, in the faith committed to the saints, have no difficulty in arriving at a clear body of belief. This we hold because it is the uniform teaching of the Church, some of it explicitly from the beginning, some of it brought out from the implicit beliefs of the Church into explicitness as the accidents of the Church's life have required. This

which we hold definitely we are bound to teach boldly. It does not at all matter whether our predecessors have known it or have been ignorant of it. To compromise, to withhold, is to treat the revelation of God as our own private possession to do with as we choose. This is essentially Protestantism.

And having, as we believe, found the truth, we are bound to act upon it with all courage, no matter where that acting may lead us. It may be that we discover that we have made a mistake and that that which we believe the Church to teach it does not intend to teach. It may be that an alternative view of the meaning of Christianity presents itself to us. One may be a Congregationalist and finding that Catholic truth and order are the teaching of the Church in all ages it will be clearly his duty to abandon Congregationalism, whatever the difficulty may be. It would clearly not be one's duty to attempt to beget an ecclesiastical bastard which would have some of the characteristics of Congregationalism and some Catholicity. Conceivably being a member of the Roman Catholic Church one might become convinced of the truth of Unitarianism, that Jesus was mere man and died and passed into the other world as like human beings, that the distinctive thing about Him was the nature of His moral teaching. One would think that one's duty in that case would be to become an Unitarian and not to make the attempt to graft Unitarianism upon Catholicity. Whatever the conclusions we may come to, it is clear that if they are contrary to the mind of the body to which we belong—why, the world is all before us where to choose. There are certain religions to suit every taste. To me it seems clear that the Protestant Episcopal Church intends to hold and to teach the whole Catholic faith.

Therefore I remain one of her priests. If I am mistaken it is easy for her to make the fact clear.

While religion involves combat and we must not shrink from it, it also is the occasion of many unnecessary combats. We should seek to understand one another's position and attack opinions rather than persons. A great deal of our friction is quite useless and therefore wicked as well as foolish. The law of charity is harmonious with a strenuous upholding of the truth and with utter plain speaking, but it is not harmonious with personal enmity and jealousy. Those who have been baptised have put on Christ and by Him, their Master, they stand and fall. We need to look at one another as members of the same Body whose unity with one another, however strained, is not utterly lost.

THE TWENTY-SECOND MEDITATION
THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION: THE
SACRIFICE

The long *Prayer* (or series of prayers) of *Consecration* is the essential feature of the whole Mass. For a thousand years, from the coming of S. Augustine until the Reformation, the *Prayer of Consecration* or *Canon* used by our English forefathers was the Canon of the Roman Mass, the same that is to be found in the Roman Missal to-day. If we seek the reason for the abandonment by the reformers of this venerable liturgical form, which comes down to us from the sixth century, it will be found to have two sources. First, the ancient Canon was supposed, mistakenly, to be bound up with certain mediæval heresies, common among the uneducated, such as a materialistic conception of the real presence and the repetition (instead of *representation*) of Christ's sacrifice. Second, and more important, it does emphatically and unmistakably teach a real sacrifice and a real, objective presence,—doctrines which were obnoxious to most of the reformers. The new Canon in the First Prayer Book adhered very closely, in outline and often in wording, to the ancient prayer. But this did not go far enough to satisfy the Protestantism which was in power. Much more drastic innovation was forced and, since 1552, the English Mass has had a sadly mutilated Canon which ends abruptly immediately after the consecration of the chalice. Our American Canon is vastly better, being adapted from that of Scotland, which follows largely the arrangement of the First English Prayer Book.

In the middle ages great importance was attached to *seeing* the Host at the elevation just after the words of consecration. It was to make sure of this that the bell was rung. The ringing of a bell at the *Sanctus* was introduced later.

Let us listen to the words of our Lord:

This do in remembrance of me.

Let us picture:

HE moment of the elevation at a solemn celebration. The music of the Benedictus has died away. A hush has fallen over the Church—a hush of expectancy as when some great event is awaited. About the altar lights gleam and waver in the unsteady hands of kneeling boys. At the side of the altar a cloud of incense floats slowly upward. The silence is broken by the low voice of the celebrant beginning the canon. “All glory be to thee, Almighty God, our heavenly Father”—He goes on to the words of institution: “Take, eat, this is my Body”—Then as he elevates the Host, the bell breaks the silence and there is the tinkle of the censer chains, and then silence again. The voice of the priest is again audible: “This is my Blood of the New Testament which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins; do this as oft as ye shall drink it in remembrance of me.” So the prayer of consecration proceeds to the end, when the priest’s voice rings out at the final elevation, and the choir responds with the *amen*, and the opening strains of the adoring Agnus are heard. The heaven seems to open to us and we behold the ceaseless worship of the eternal world. We hear the “voice of many angels round about the throne and the living creatures and the elders.” The words of their chant mingle with ours: “Worthy is the

Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever!"

Consider, first,

That we understand the work of God for us only as light is shed upon it from above. The central fact of our Eucharistic worship is not what we do, but what God does. And our understanding of the fact must be drawn from the completed act detached from its earthly limitations, as it is shown to us in its celestial setting. The Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church Militant is identical with that of the Church Triumphant, with necessary modifications in its setting, but with no change in its essential nature or meaning. We are permitted to join in the One Offering in its setting here on earth; we are permitted to look through the eyes of S. John at the same Offering as it is presented in heaven. We see the Lamb who was slain still offering Himself, and we see Him the center of the worship of the Hosts who sing about the throne of God most High. All the universe joins in this triumphant act of worship, for all have been redeemed from their bondage by the sacrifice of the Lamb. The bondage of the creature which shares so mysteriously in the destiny of the sons of God is dissolved, and it too joins in the chorus of adoration. The earthly altar about which we kneel is thus revealed to us as a form of the self-manifestation of the slain Lamb where we feebly echo the praises which fill the Temple in heaven, and repeat under

our limitations the adoration which thrills and beautifies those who dwell in the unveiled Presence. Worship, worship prostrate and self-outpouring, is our proper attitude before the veiled Presence in the Eucharist: for though we be of the Church Militant and are limited in our vision of reality, yet are we of the same Body, and are redeemed by the same Blood as those who see the Lamb in His beauty, and adore in wonder the work that He has accomplished through the sacrifice of Himself for the redemption of the world.

Consider, second,

Whether the Eucharistic action in which we so often join, is for us the joining in the one sacrifice forever for the sins of all the world. The spiritual strain of such an act is so great that we are in constant danger of letting ourselves down to some slighter appreciation of it. Men have found it much easier to think of the Eucharist as the oft-repeated echo of some long past tragedy than as the perpetual presentation of an eternal act. They have found it easier to regard their participation in it as an act of thoughtful reminiscence rather than as an actual present self-merging in a spiritual reality. But while we dwell gratefully on all that our Lord did for us in years of his earthly life, the thing of present importance is what was prepared by the past and has grown out of it, the sacrificial self-presentation in heaven of the triumphant and ascended Christ, through which we have constant access to the Father. Our access to the Father is a present need and is through a presently existing medium. "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." If a sacrifice was ever necessary for our approach

to God it is eternally necessary. We are presented to the Father, not by Christ, as by one standing apart from us, but *in* Christ as those who have been assumed to unity with Himself, and by their self-sacrifice have lost themselves in His sacrifice. When, then, we, joining in the sacrificial worship of the Church, offer, as members of the Church, the service that Christ Himself ordained to be offered, we are offering it as something of which we *are* a part, not simply as something in which we *have* a part. Our self-oblation, which is so important a feature of our eucharistic worship, is the self-oblation of those who are members of the Body, and thus are taken up into the sacrifice of their Head. We in Him and He in us—it is all one sacrifice that is presented for the divine acceptance by the Body's Head. Where the Head is there is the Body also, and all the members of the Body.

Let us, then, pray,

That we may understand our significance as members of the Body of Christ. Pray, that we may always offer ourselves to the Father as members of his Son.

We Thy servants, O Lord, bow down our necks before the holy altar, awaiting Thy rich mercies. Send forth upon us, O Lord, Thine abundant peace and benediction, and hallow our souls and bodies and spirits, that we may be made worthy communicants of Thy Holy Mysteries, unto remission of sins and eternal life. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION. THE SACRIFICE

The Holy Eucharist is the sacrament by which Jesus Christ our Lord, truly present under the forms of bread

and wine, offers Himself in sacrifice to God and unites the faithful recipients of the sacred species to Himself. The sacrament is at once a sacrifice and a feast upon a sacrifice. We are at present concerned with the first aspect, the sacrifice.

What is a sacrifice? We think of it as something given, offered to God, but the value of that which is given is as a sacrifice, not the intrinsic value of the thing itself, but its representative value. Its worth is conditioned upon its embodiment of the giver and its presentation of him before God. In other words the value of a sacrifice lies in its self-sacrifice, and the gift of God which embodies no sacrifice has no sacrificial value. This appears clearly in our Lord's lesson drawn from the spectacle of those who were casting their goods into the treasury. The gift of the poor widow had greater value because of its greater sacrifice. Gifts which entail no sacrifice can have no sacrificial value. For that reason under the old law of sacrifice only such things were proper matter of sacrifice as were the embodiments of the labor of the sacrificer, that carried with them something of himself. Ultimately, therefore, all sacrifice is self-sacrifice. Back of every sacrificial gift, giving it worth, is the giver himself, who is presenting himself through his gift. The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity took our nature upon Him in order that He might offer to the Father an acceptable sacrifice on behalf of man. Through his voluntary separation from God man had lost the power of offering such a sacrifice. Hence God wills to provide a way by which that which man could not do for himself shall yet be done for him, that which man could not of himself,—of his own power or of his own resources,—do, could not be done by one who stood wholly outside of humanity, what-

ever might be his willingness. An angel could not act for man because he has no real point of contact with man. An atoning sacrifice for man required the action of one who should be at once more than man and at the same time identified with man, who should be at the same time both within and without human nature. This apparently impossible office of mediator was undertaken by God Himself when, in the Person of the Son, He took human nature in the womb of Blessed Mary and was born into the world. The Child of Mary of Nazareth was at once God, of the substance of His Father, begotten before the world, and Man, of the substance of His mother, born in the world; perfect God and perfect Man with a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Jesus Christ, God Incarnate, fulfils the conditions of a perfect sacrifice for man in that His action is untainted by sin on the one hand and is the action of Man on the other. He is not God acting on man from the outside, but God acting in union with man, and this by a truly human action.

Jesus therefore was truly a mediator, the one and only possible mediator, in the complete sense of the word, between God and man, and the means of this mediatorialship is sacrifice. The body that was prepared for Him was a sacrificial body. His whole life was a life of self-presentation to the Father's will, which it was His meat and drink to do. He surrendered His human will utterly to the purpose of God in the final crisis in the Garden where there was complete and utter acceptance of it: "not my will, but thine, be done." The Cross was but the consummation of the sacrifice which began in the Incarnation and at every moment of the sacrificial life it was man as well as God, man in union with God, who was making sacrifice of himself. The action of Jesus Christ was as

truly human as it was truly divine. The sacrifice was not only offered for man, but it was offered *by* man.

And the sacrifice which was offered upon the Cross as the final state of its accomplishment has never ceased to be offered. It has not been, and cannot be repeated. It is an unique act, but it is also an eternal act. It is one sacrifice, but it is one sacrifice forever, a sacrifice without end. When we meet together therefore, to celebrate the Holy Eucharist we are offering in sacrifice the one Sacrifice by which Christ blotted out the sin of the world and reconciled us to the Father. This one and only Sacrifice, consummated upon the Cross and presented to God continually in heaven, is also presented and offered to God in the Holy Eucharist. There cannot be two sacrifices or many sacrifices, because essentially the Cross, the heavenly altar, and the altar of the Church are one.

This sacrificial character of the Eucharist comes out clearly in the narratives of the institution. "And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." (St. Luke 22: 19-20.) This memorial is a memorial of the death of our Lord, not in the sense of a commemoration in which the bread and wine suggest to us the Body and Blood which were given for us, but a true representation in which we offer to God the victim who was sacrificed for us.

Jesus Christ offered Himself for our sins, "And not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Into the heart of the mystery of propitiation we do not try to enter. We content ourselves with the thought that Jesus in His action is acting as our Head and that we,

in partaking of the results and benefits of His sacrifice, are acting as His members. His propitiation endures as a fact and not as a mere memory. We approach God not as recalling something that He has done, but as united to an existing fact. For us the significance of the sacrifice is not that a change of relation has been wrought for us by Christ, a change of relation between God and ourselves, but that an actual change of nature has been made possible. While we are yet sinners Christ died for us and He died that we might be no longer sinners. He died for us that we might in Him die to sin and rise again unto righteousness.

This then is the sacrifice that we present and plead before God for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. And because sacrifice is the supreme human act of worship the presentation and pleading of the one Sacrifice has from the beginning been the central and supreme act of worship of the Christian Church. The very earliest gatherings of the Christians were gatherings for eucharistic worship. "And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." (Acts 2:46.) As we follow the missionary in his progress it is the Eucharist again that we find. Over and over again we find S. Paul celebrating the Communion with his converts. And as we pass beyond the Scriptures into the history of the Church the same is true. Never has this sacrifice ceased to be the central act of Christian worship. There have unfortunately been periods in the history of the Anglican Church when this central character of the Eucharist has been neglected, but they are not periods upon which we can look back with much pride in their spiritual accomplishment. It still remains true

that not everywhere among us is the nature of the Eucharist recognized and the worship that our Lord commanded, offered. But the Church itself, in its legislation and in its services, has never ceased to point men to the altar as the place of worship and the means of grace.

Worship, as I have insisted, in its complete form, is sacrifice, and all true sacrifice resolves itself into self-sacrifice. This is as true of the public worship of the Church as elsewhere. The worshipper approaches the Mass as one offering a sacrifice. But how can he possibly be said to offer the sacrifice of Christ in an act of personal self-sacrifice? Is he not necessarily an onlooker at what Christ alone can do? Not at all! But because of what Christ has done the Christian has passed into a new state in which he has a real and true part in the offering of Christ's sacrifice which is now, in virtue of what has been done to him, also his sacrifice. For as a result of the propitiation offered by Christ, man has been enabled to become more than man. He has been enabled to pass from a state of nature into a state of grace; to pass from the state of a creature of God into that of a child of God. We have been made one with Christ, incorporated, made one body with Him.

And therefore this sacrifice is no more merely something *for* us, but it is something that *is* ourselves. We in Christ are now vitally interested in the act of worship we participate in. What is to-day offered upon the altar is the whole Christ, the Mystical Body, the Head and the Members. What is offering is also Whole Christ, of whom we are part. Into this infinite sacrifice we ourselves are plunged. We ourselves, our souls and bodies, by an act of surrender and sacrifice, are joined to the one sacrifice of the Cross. Into the propitiatory sufferings of

the Calvary our sufferings go. For God looks upon us and accepts us and places us, in that He sees us to be members of His Son and therefore His children by adoption.

An act of sacrifice is not only offered to somebody, but it is offered from somebody. It is deliberating directed to an end. Christ's sacrifice was directed to the salvation of all men. "God sent His only begotten Son into the world that all men through Him might be saved." And this sacrifice of the Son of God, which was for all men, accomplished potentially that which it purposed, the salvation of all men. It is the will of God that all men should believe and be saved but inasmuch as man is endowed with a free will, for only so can he have moral or spiritual value, this salvation bought for him by Christ could only be potential. It could only be offered, not effected, till man freely chose that it should be his own by an act of his will. The salvation of all men has been made possible. The salvation of any individual man can only be made actual by his personal acceptance of the terms of salvation. In other words, God wills that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. Salvation is universal in its offer. But only such are saved as choose freely to accept the offer. Those who have accepted the offer of heaven and have continued in the unity of the Body of Christ are those whose privilege it is to offer the sacrifice, and they offer it in the first place to the glory and honor of God and in thanksgiving for the work that He has wrought in the Incarnation of His Son. To increase the glory of God is the primary end of the worshipping creature. We approach the altar to offer this sacrifice and we are not in the first place thinking of self but of God. "We praise Thee, we

bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory." We desire the increase of the glory of God but how can we desire such a thing? Has not God all the glory that is possible in that eternal and everlasting glory in which the Incarnate Son shared "before the world was"? Certainly we cannot increase that eternal glory of the Blessed Trinity. But there is another glory of God, that external glory, which is His through the tribute of His creatures. The glory of God which arises whenever He is shown to be effective in human life can be constantly increased, and it is the first duty of the creature to increase it. The glory of God is manifested in His saints, and each of us in proportion to our sanctity. Every good work for God, harmonious with the will of God, promotes the glory of God. All our good works increase that glory. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven," our Lord directs us. And here, in the worship of the Mass, we are in a special way manifesting the Divine Glory. Every Mass adds to the glory of God, for once more it offers that Sacrifice which is the embodiment of His love, and offers to man the means of salvation which God has provided for him.

It is further our privilege to offer the whole Sacrifice for our own needs and the needs of those in whom we are interested. The prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church Militant has set before us the lesson and the outline of this pleading. We have already recalled the necessity of bringing with us to the Mass a clear intention, a purpose for which we are offering the Sacrifice on this particular occasion. It will, perhaps, be as well here to dwell for a moment on the immensity of the privilege

that is ours in thus bringing our petitions to the altar. This Sacrifice of Jesus Christ is here being presented to God. It is a sacrifice for all the sins of all the world, a boundless propitiation; and now, into this tremendous action, I come to insert my own personal desires. The desire for a little strength to resist a temptation; for a special grace for a friend; for the healing of a child. Our instinct is to think how great is the contrast in values, to fall into an unfortunately prevalent state of mind which finds it impossible to believe that God, Who is concerned with things infinite, can also concern Himself with things finite. God, Who made the universe and governs it, how can He be concerned with the pitiful affairs of an individual on an insignificant planet; how can we expect that the offering of a sacrifice can tolerate the presentation of our trivial needs?

Well, our Lord seems to have anticipated this state of mind and done all He could to meet it. He was especially concerned that men should not think of God only as the far-off Creator and ruling power, inaccessible to the needs of individual men. Clearly He anticipated the modern attitude which is so impatient of the prayer of individual petition and can only think of the universe as governed by fixed laws. Our Lord did all He could to persuade us that the universe is governed by a *person* and that that person is a person with a heart. He chose constantly to call Him Father,—My Father and your Father,—and bids us address ourselves to “Our Father in Heaven.” He dwells with emphasis, clearly foreseeing our case, on the individual care of our heavenly Father for the very least of all things. “Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father.” It is not unnatural therefore to meet the objection that the universe is gov-

erned by law with the statement that it is governed by the law of God, and that the God who governs the universe through His laws is also our Father and has bidden us treat Him as such,—treat Him with the same sort of love and confidence as we treat our human father. One gathers that for the modern man “law” rules God, if indeed he can believe in God at all. But for the Christian God rules the universe, and “law” is but the expression of His will. That day by day should be uniform is entirely to be expected, as His will is for our good. That it would be capable of working the good of the individual is inevitable, because His will is love.

We have no difficulty, therefore, in bringing all our needs to merge them in the offered sacrifice. All our needs, remembering the scope of the Sacrifice. Remembering, too, that it is a propitiatory sacrifice for the dead as well as for the living. When once one has entered into the meaning of propitiation and has learned to use the sacrifice of the Mass, one's devotional life broadens and deepens and is filled with joy. And this is especially so in relation to our dead. They, we come to understand, are still within the scope of the Sacrifice. They are still one with us in the Body of Christ. Death proves no bar to our prayers, but only defines the purpose of them. No longer are the holy dead subject to temptation and sin but they are in a state of growth and development, where our prayers and good works may bring help, light and refreshment to them. As we bring their names to the altar, and enclose them in the intention wherewith we offer the sacrifice, we feel joy in this privilege of continuing the office of love. Of not simply remembering with gratitude what they have been to us, but rejoicing in the opportunity we still have of ministering

to them. One feels that so often the dead become mere memories, recalled with something of affection and regret, but tending more and more as the years pass, to "fade into the infinite azure of the past," rather than human beings with whom we still have active relations. Such relations the Mass makes possible and is the medium of, and the continuance of, such relations of love and prayer and ministry. We may be confident it brings joy to those whose names we present before God in this Sacrifice. Imagine what they feel when they find that they are not isolated in some far-off realm; not cut off from all they have known and loved, but are followed into the world where they pass the time of their purification by the loving thoughts of those whom they have loved on earth. And imagine, too, the feelings of some soul which has barely escaped spiritual shipwreck, to find that a love he had treated lightly, or wholly disregarded, is still alive and following him here. It may be that some child, barely rescued by the prayers of a mother, awakens to the knowledge of this. Comes to see the narrowness of his escape and how he was rescued. Then finds the love that clung to his wayward soul is still warm about him. How shall there not be in that soul thankfulness and joy? And from the souls whom our prayers followed with their helpfulness, there comes back to us the help we need. It may be, it surely is, that a soul looking back from purgatory can see our lives and their needs more clearly than we can, and can bring to them the help of discerning prayer. There is no need that we should be troubled about how these things are. The mechanism, so to call it, of the Kingdom of God is no doubt mysterious and its mode of action in detail unknown, but we do not have to know how our prayers reach those who have gone

before, or how their knowledge of our need comes to them, any more than the child who speaks over a telephone, or listens to a radio, needs to understand the mechanism he is using. We all who are in Christ are one family with Him and members one of another, and that is the crown of our hope and confidence.

The Christian life is one that is in constant contact with the Sacrifice. It should reflect this contact by being itself sacrificial. To recall once more, we are members of Christ and of a Christ who is willingly giving Himself a Sacrifice for His brethren. If there be any meaning in the imitation of Christ it will surely result in a life which repeats Christ's sacrificial aspect. We have not merely to imitate some of the more attractive aspects of our Lord's life. We have to organize life on the same fashion as His was organized, as a life of sacrifice and of self-oblation. I do not know what we can mean by Christian life, except it be a life that is given. There can be no meaning in the Christian profession of a life which is lived for self. How far off we feel from any note of Christianity in these words of a sceptic: "Small and grown-up, young and old, the farthest possible from myself. . . . Far from seeking to know myself I have made every effort to be ignorant of self. I hold that self-knowledge is a source of care, disquiet, torment. . . . Be ignorant of self is the precept of wisdom. I have always known how to be distracted and this has been my whole art of life."

Far all that from any Christian ideal of life. It is the ideal of selfishness, of self-gratification. The man who professes such a creed will not only avoid knowing himself, but will instinctively avoid knowing his brother. He will recognize no demand of any other life on him.

The whole notion of sacrifice will be utterly repugnant to him. And that though the case so frankly stated is extreme; though the average man, and very likely the writer himself, when he is living and not posing, will not live in such utter selfishness. The type of action which is represented by this confession is not at all rare. And it is not at all rare among those who think themselves Christians. We can understand that the call of a sacrificed life makes no popular appeal. People are always restless and uncomfortable when one speaks plainly of what following our Lord actually involves. So long as one dwells on the life and gentleness of Jesus of Nazareth going about doing good and on the idyllic beauty of the life of Jesus and His Apostles, one is listened to. But that is very far from the presentation of the actual life of Jesus. Jesus and His Apostles were not all the time wandering about the lanes of Galilee in beautiful weather, picking the flowers that grew by the wayside. Jesus was not always talking about the lilies of the field. He sometimes found it necessary to speak plainly of sin and of the results of sin. He was not always embracing little children, or healing sick folk. He was sometimes contending with Pharisees and casting out devils. There were rainy days as well as days of sunshine, and nights of storm upon the sea, and days of toil and hunger upon the land. And in the end, the life led up to a Cross on a hilltop and a man hanging in torture thereon. And what the Master suffered the disciple is called to suffer. "The disciple is not above his Master, nor the servant above his Lord." The call to a Christian is not, if any man will come after Me let him seek for all the pleasure he can gain because life is short and death certain; nor, let him devote himself to making a fortune, and that so

utterly that he has time for nothing else, because business is business. But the call is, if any man will come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

We may dislike the Christian religion and reject it because of its demands. Many do, and their action is quite intelligible. We may not like the Catholic religion, with its pressure on the ideal of the sacrificed life. We may take refuge in a comfortable modern theory of religion which says, "Before all things, no asceticism"; which holds that Jesus was not an ascetic but that they best understand Him who thought of Him as a gluttonous man and a wine bibber. But if we hold the Catholic ideal of life we must assent to sacrifice as the meaning of it, whatever may be our success or failure in the attainment of the ideal. To follow Jesus means to follow as far as Calvary. To be like Jesus means to be sacrificed. It is easy enough to draw a partial portrait of our Lord, to emphasize one aspect of His life at the expense of the others. It is even possible to hold that certain elements of His life are applicable to modern conditions, and others not; but it can hardly be worth while to play with serious facts and their necessary issues in that way. The soul that enters into the joy of His Lord enters through the door of sacrifice, in pain, and the password that admits it is "I am crucified with Christ." The mark of identification as the follower of the Master is the sign of the Cross.

No doubt there is a beyond. We do not abide on Calvary. We pass beyond. But we are not at present concerned with that. We are concerned, not with the reward, but with what justifies and makes it possible. Our relation with Christ has placed us in a state of grace, and

for the present a state of grace is a state of sacrifice.

And it is because we are in a state of grace that our sacrifice can profit others and be applied to their needs. It is out of our state of sacrifice, out of our inherence in a crucified Master that the deeper possibilities of our usefulness to the brethren arise. It is usual to regard the sacrifice of our fellows as the more or less fussy doing of odd jobs to make them more comfortable. One would not criticize that, though one may hold it to be the pressing business of the State to see to it that all its citizens are warmed and fed and not to confine its operation to providing contracts and places for political supporters. But whatever may be the obligation of the Christian to minister to the physical needs of a brother, and those obligations cannot be disregarded without sin, there are obligations of deeper import and of more far-reaching consequences. Whatever may be the individual case, the existence of suffering is, in vast numbers of cases, the consequence of sin. Modern medicine is constantly seeking the cause of disease; is not at all content to go on treating certain symptoms, but wants to know how disease arises. And because it thus seeks origins and deals with them it is enabled to blot out, or enormously reduce, the prevalence of certain diseases. As Christians we know the cause of a vast amount of human suffering and we are bound to deal with that cause. We cannot be content to deal with symptoms, but must go to the root of the trouble.

It is the victim of Calvary, Who is also the Victim of the Altar, Who is the means of the healing of the nations. And He wills to heal the nations, not by the exercise of omnipotence from heaven but by the exhibition of sacrifice here. His method is not compulsion

but attraction. "And I, if I be lifted up will draw all men unto Me." And He draws men, not only because they see Him uplifted, but because they see others, their brethren, who are crucified with Him, who are leading the life of the Cross here and are making themselves the medium of His sacrificial passion. The Christian life grows out of the life of Jesus, and He is a manifestation of it, and is therefore a thing of power. It has always been found so. Wherever there have been men and women who manifest in any fulness the Christ-life as a life of sacrifice there men were drawn to Christ and were healed of their sins and were perfected in Him. You have only to turn over the history of the Church and ask what lives have actually been the strongest for good to be convinced that they were sacrificial lives.

And you will find also that they were lives of deepest joy. In the giving of themselves they actually found Him whom their soul loved. Found Him as friend and companion and as the sustenance and strength of their lives. They were able to live at all as sacrificed because they found that it was not they that lived but Christ that lived in them. Their reward began here in the conscious possession of Christ, and their life beyond the grave could only be a deepening of the experience thus begun.

THE TWENTY-THIRD MEDITATION
THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION:
THE PRESENCE

For a valid or genuine Mass these things are necessary: a duly ordained *minister*, and proper *intention*, *matter* and *form*. The minister is, of course, a priest who has been ordained by a bishop of the apostolic succession. He must have the proper "*intention*," that is, he must intend, seriously, to consecrate. The "*matter*" which the church demands as necessary is *wheat bread* and *wine of the grape*. The necessary "*form*" is the recital of our Lord's *Words of Institution*, "This is my body,—this is my blood." Unfermented grape juice is not what was used by our Lord and its substitution for wine renders the Mass invalid and null.

Let us listen to the words of the Gospel:

Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace be unto you.

Let us picture:

HIS locked room where the disciples are assembled for fear of the Jews. These hours through which the Apostles were to pass were of those hours in which men live so intensely that the energy of a lifetime is concentrated and exhausted in them. We feel that between the gathering in the Upper Chamber for the Last Supper and the Ascension of our Lord the Apostles effectively lived more than in all their lives before. It is in the midst of this overwhelming experience that we see them gathered in the Closed Room after the Resurrection in a state of fear and utter perplexity. On the one hand, the enmity of the Jews and its possible results were clear and indisputable things—there might come a knock at the door at any moment and harsh voices, accompanied by the rattle of arms, might bid them open; and they were not yet prepared by the Holy Spirit for martyrdom. On the other hand, the little company of the Companions of Jesus are thrilled by the rumours that run among them that He Whom they had seen crucified and carried to His burial had come forth from His tomb and appeared to “certain women of their company.” This they find difficulty in believing, yet the testimony is explicit. We cannot doubt that it was of this that they were talking

in the Chamber, behind closed doors—of this, and of what they ought to do to make sure of the fact one way or another. And then, silently, with no sound of approach or opening of doors, came “Jesus, and stood in the midst of them and said, Peace be unto you.” And peace falls, while they stand awestruck and adoring. They will wonder and discuss again by and by; but for the moment the one fact that their consciousness can grasp is that Jesus is here. Notwithstanding all the evidence of His death He is here among them again, He whom they had loved and thought they had lost is with them again. *Jesus is here.*

Consider, first,

That the restored presence of Jesus lies back of all that the Apostles subsequently did. It, and it alone, can explain their after life. And it was not simply this passing restoration by which our Lord came back in bodily presence from the grave and was with them in an intermittent and awe-inspiring intercourse for the Forty Days which were brought to a close by His Ascension; but it was that permanent reestablishment of His presence through the sacrament which He had instituted to mediate it, which was the abiding ground of their new outlook on life and of the new strength with which they faced the life to which He called them. Much of the secret of their power to witness to Him must be sought in the ever-open access they have to Him in the Blessed Sacrament. Let us try to understand what it meant to them, when all the powers of the world arrayed themselves against their mission; when they were themselves, it may be, tempted to look back on the experiences of the Forty Days as some unintelligible dream, to have borne in upon them

at their morning celebration of the Eucharist the soul-filling experience: *Jesus is here.* That was an experience which might be denied by the world, but it is an experience which cannot be denied by anyone who has passed through it. They might be called on, as was the great Apostle of the Gentiles, to thread their way through innumerable perils, and to endure sufferings and labors without end; but they were sustained in them all and came out of them all "more than conquerors," because of their daily experience of the Presence which united their souls with the risen life of their Master and God. In especial, they found in oft-ministered sacrament of union that gift which He had breathed on them in the Closed Room and which is so evident a possession in all their ministry—the gift of his Peace.

Consider, second,

That we have continual access to our Lord through the same channel and we may draw our strength for daily needs from the same source, His ascended humanity made present for our spiritual food and sustenance in the sacrament of the altar. All the other gifts of our Lord are contained in this supreme gift of himself by which is consummated and sustained our vital spiritual union with him by which our souls and bodies are made partakers of eternal life. Our lives are of manifold occupations and there are many ways in which spiritual energy is consumed and exhausted; there is one unfailing way in which it can be renewed. When we come to kneel about His altar then once more Jesus Himself comes and stands in the midst of us; and whatever our grief or burden, whatever exhausted soul or laden heart or troubled mind we bring with us, we experience the

power of His Presence and hear His renewing word, "Peace be unto you." We enter into Him and He to us, and He wraps us about in His love and we find ourselves sheltered in the faithfulness of His promise: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid!" It is our constant experience, is it not, that *Jesus is here?* He is with us not only in the reception of His sacrament, but in a Presence which abides in all our life, strengthening it to go forth to its labor until evening, stilling all its fears and purifying all its desires. Hungry souls, thirsty souls, weary souls, yes, and glad and eager souls, filled with the spirit of hopeful aspiration and passionate self-offering, open their doors to His coming and find in His advent all their hopes fulfilled, all their longings accomplished, all their self-oblation accepted. "I and my Father will come to him and sup with him"—such is the rich and wonderful promise; and the fulfilment is joy unspeakable and full of glory. We enter into the experience of the Apostles, and know, as they knew, that *Jesus is here.*

Let us, then, pray,

For greater trust in our Lord's promises, and greater eagerness to seek Jesus in the sacrament of his love.

Thou hast given us, O Lord, sanctification by the Communion of the Most Holy Body and Precious Blood of Thine Only-begotten Son; grant us the grace and gift of Thy Holy Spirit, and keep us unreproved in life, and lead us on to perfect adoption and redemption, and the eternal joys to come; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST. THE PRESENCE

The Catholic Church has always understood our Lord's words at the institution of the Blessed Sacrament in the literal sense. Of what He gave to them He said, "This is My Body. This is My Blood." He did not say, this is a symbol of My Body, or even this bread is My Body; but *this*, this that I give you, is My Body and My Blood. That which was essentially in this gift was Himself. This is the meaning of the two great passages in the New Testament which are interpretative of the Eucharist. The discourse of our Lord reported by S. John in the Sixth Chapter of His Gospel is a perfectly distinct assertion of the Real Presence. "Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed." And S. Paul's account of the institution, which he asserts himself to have "received from the Lord," is in perfect agreement with this Gospel statement. "For I received of the Lord that which also I declare unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, take, eat: this is My Body, which is broken for you: this do for a remembrance of Me. And after the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, this cup is the new covenant in My Blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, for a remembrance of Me."

That which is present in the Sacrament of the Altar is therefore Jesus Christ. There is, it is true, a certain amount of symbolism in the Sacrament. The bread and the wine and the manual acts of the priest in relation

to them do represent on the altar the death of Christ, the Body broken and the Blood shed. The Drama of Calvary is re-enacted. The death, the sacrifice of Christ, of course cannot be repeated; it can only be represented. Christ died once upon the Cross, but His death is endlessly presented in the Sacrament. But this representation is not the representation of something over and ended, or of something absent. No, while the death of Christ is symbolically represented, the Christ whose death is dramatically symbolized is actually present as victim upon the altar. The mode of the sacrifice is represented. The fact of the sacrifice is presented and pleaded before God as our means of approach to Him.

In this sense, therefore, the bread and the wine are symbols setting forth a past act, which act, nevertheless, has passed into a state of permanency through the continued existence of the sacrificial victim, who though He were dead yet is alive, and ever liveth to make intercession for us, the intercession of His sacrifice. The sacred elements are also symbols of the Body and Blood of Christ. As such they are continually spoken of by early and Catholic Christian writers. Writers of the Reformation period and since have often seized upon these utterances of the Fathers as indication that they did not believe in the Real Presence of our Lord in the sacrament, but held the whole transaction to be merely symbolical and commemorative of a past event. At most the Eucharistic action would be a symbol of an action of God upon the spirit of man in response to man's faith in the promises of God. The Eucharist is in fact from this point of view an appeal to faith and a symbol of the Christ which is given in response to faith.

But if the utterances of the early Christian writers

are studied as a whole it is seen that such is not their meaning. They assert quite definitely the Real Presence of Christ in the sacrament, and when they speak of the elements as symbolical they are not at all intending to indicate by their statement that they are to be understood as mere figures. Rather they mean that the presence of Christ that is symbolized is real. A symbol is necessarily a symbol of a reality: what in every case we have to find out is the relation between symbol and reality. Is the symbol a symbol of something absent and distant? Is it a mere reminder of something we cannot reach? In that sense a photograph is a symbol and a reminder of an absent friend. When we look on it we recall our friend and our affection becomes active. But a symbol may also be a sign of something present, though unseen. In this sense the human face is a symbol of the human soul. We look at the human face with its shifting expressions: the light of joy, the clouds of sorrow and pain that pass over it, and it tells us of the state of the soul that we do not see. It is a symbol, but now a symbol of something present and active.

It is in this latter sense that Catholics speak of the Holy Communion as symbolical. Symbolical of a present though hidden reality. "An outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace," the Catechism puts it. The sign of a grace that is present, of a reality that is unseen, which is vital and active under the veil of the material elements. The Eucharist is not an attempt to make the past vivid to us; nor an appeal to faith, but a setting forth of an actual present action of God upon the soul: the embodiment of an offer of God intimately to deal with the soul.

In this teaching of the Church about the Eucharist

we see what we see everywhere in Catholic doctrine, a constancy of meaning coupled with a variety of expression. The elemental practices of Christianity are of so wonderful a content, and were so new to the world at the time of their annunciation that their full meaning and implications could not be grasped at once. Also, because the facts were new, a new vocabulary had to be created wherewith to state them. The consequence was that while the Christian fact itself was undoubted, it took time to find an ideal form for its expression. The Church never had any doubt of the Deity of Christ; but it took long to find a form which could state that fact so perfectly as to leave no room for error. While that form was being sought, many tentative and imperfect forms of expression were current. Thus controversies as to the Deity of our Lord and form in which this belief of the Church was to be expressed took place at once after the proclamation of the Gospel. The fact of the Real Presence of our Lord in the sacrament remained long without serious controversy as to the actual meaning and the mode of statement. Men were content to believe in a Presence of our Lord which they did not define, but which they acknowledged by their worship of Him as present. It was well on in the Christian era before errors as to the meaning of this sacrament called Catholic Apologists to its defense. We find therefore clearness of belief through the early centuries, but no dogmatic definitions. What we do find expressing the authoritative belief of the Church are the formal liturgies which are in use. These cannot be taken as the passing utterance of individuals, as forms of expression which are shaped by the exigencies of the occasion; and the purpose which is served by these utterances as the controversial needs of an apologist seek-

ing to persuade men, or as the exaggerations and over-emphasis of a pressure seeking to move men to action. No, the expressions of the liturgies must be taken as the deliberate expression of the mind of the Church and cannot be set aside as excited over-statement, or as Oriental Rhetoric. The words of the liturgy are the expression of the Church's belief, made before God in the most solemn moments of its action. And it is there that we look to find what the Church means by the Presence of Christ in the sacrament of the altar. While we do not find, and do not expect to find there a formal definition as in a Creed, we do find what we want to find, an unmistakable setting out of the Church's belief. There is left by the liturgies no least shadow of doubt as to the reality and objectivity of the Presence of our Lord in the sacrament after the priest has spoken over the elements the words of consecration.

For long the Church considered such indications of its belief through the liturgies and through the teaching of its approved theologians enough for the purpose of the spiritual life which the Eucharist serves. But there came a time in the West when Eucharistic controversies seemed to compel an authoritative definition, as in an earlier period controversies had compelled a definition of the Deity of our Lord. The Latin Church met this need by the definition of the real Presence in the Dogma of Transubstantiation. This definition has missed an ecumenical acceptance. This does not mean that it is not true, but only that the whole Church has not declared it to express its mind, as, for example, it has declared the Nicene Creed to express its mind as to the meaning of the Deity of Christ. We are, therefore, not bound to accept the Dogma of Transubstantiation as an expression

of the truth of the real Presence with the certainty of fact. The dogma may be true, and if we are to have a formal definition at all I do not see that any other is possible. The limitation of it as a definition is that it does not for the ordinary man at all clear up the meaning of the real Presence. The purpose of a definition is to clear away difficulties and elucidate meaning. The Dogma of Transubstantiation does not do this, except in the case of a few trained minds. The person untrained in scholastic theology fails utterly to understand what it means. The statement of its meaning that we find in books of controversy are mostly grotesque mis-statements. It has made it no easier for the plain man to understand the Real Presence. It has in fact added to his difficulty. To accept the Real Presence as a fact is not hard. To understand the Latin Dogma is for the plain man impossible.

What then is the plain man to believe as to the Real Presence? He is to believe that the Holy Eucharist effects the actual Presence of Jesus Christ upon the altar. He is to believe that what he therefore offers in his act of worship is Jesus Christ as sacrificed. That what he receives in his communion is Jesus Christ Himself. When the priest gives to the communicant the sacred species and says, "The Body, the Blood, of our Lord Jesus Christ," his words echo the meaning of the sacrifice which has just been offered, and remind the recipient that he is feeding upon a sacrifice. It is not intended to assert that the species of bread conveys the Body of Christ exclusively, nor the species of wine, the Blood of Christ. The words emphasize the dying of Christ for us. But Christ does not exist divided, and His Body and Blood are not separable from one another, nor are they separable from

His Divine Presence. What therefore is actually received in the act of communion is Jesus Christ, God in man. Each particle of bread, each drop of wine, to speak of the elements as they appear, is the means whereby the faithful communicant receives Jesus Christ; whereby the Divine-human Guest enters the soul.

This belief at once puts to one side as unintelligible the common objection to Catholic teaching that it is materialistic. Only a crude misunderstanding of Transubstantiation could make such a statement possible. There seem to have been such crude misunderstandings in the later Middle Ages and we find echoes of them in the Reformation formularies. But if the Presence in the Eucharist, the reality which we receive in the sacrament is Incarnate God, then whatever else may be said of our belief, it is not materialistic. It is the most completely spiritual belief that can be imagined, as it is an assertion of our belief in our being taken into personal union with God.

And it is as well to emphasize that by God in this connection we mean God the Blessed Trinity. Our divisions of the Godhead, our assertions that this or that Divine Person performs this or that action must always be understood as the appropriation of a work to a person, as that person is revealed as the immediate source of the work. It must not be understood as though there were independent and separate action on the part of any Person of the Godhead. Where one Person is said to act all three Divine Persons are in fact concerned. And where one Person is present there the undivided Trinity is present. While therefore we emphasize the presence of our Lord's humanity in the Eucharist, because the humanity is the immediate medium of the sacramental action upon us

we do not think of that humanity as separated from the person of the Son of God whose humanity it is. And when we think of the presence in the Eucharist as that of the Incarnate Son, we do not think of Him as present in separateness from the other Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Rather where the Son is there also must the Father and the Spirit be. The final account therefore of the Presence in the Eucharist is that it is the Presence of God, Three in One.

This, too, removes another objection to Catholic teaching and practice—that is that it is idolatrous. It is of course conceivable that the Catholic is wholly mistaken in his belief and therefore mistaken in his worship. But at least the sole intention of the Catholic as he kneels at the Mass or before the Tabernacle is to worship God. He believes that God the Blessed Trinity has vouchsafed to manifest Himself here in a special mode as the object of his worship and he renders that worship. Ordinarily of course he does not analyze his act of worship to discover its ultimate meaning, but when he does he is quite clear that he is not worshipping bread and wine; that he is not even worshipping the separate humanity of Christ; that he is not even worshipping Christ as a separate Divine Being, but that his worship is the worship of the one God who is one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.

What the Catholic means then by Eucharistic adoration, or the worship of the sacrament, is the worship of the Blessed Trinity. We are constantly being told that Catholic devotion obscures the purity of the worship of God. One is inclined to ask where in Christendom one can find the worship of the Blessed Trinity emphasized and the “pure worship of God” intelligently presented outside the worship of the Catholic Church. If we look

outside the Church for statements of the meaning of God, or the worship of God, we are quite likely to find ourselves in contact with what is essentially a mode of philosophical theism. If we look for the meaning of the worship of Jesus we most likely find it in terms undistinguishable from Arianism. We find prevalent a worship of one God who is not Trinity, and the worship of one God combined with the equal worship of a divinised man. It is precisely the Catholic Church, which is accused of obscuring the pure worship of God and of abandoning it for the worship of the Blessed Virgin and saints, which is the sole effective support of Trinitarianism worship. Even where Trinitarianism remains the official teaching and the theological belief, what actual devotion do we find to the Trinity? It may of course be replied that in such quarters God means Trinity. But does it effectively? Does it mean the worship of the Three in One? Does it mean any effective devotion to the several Persons of the Trinity? Whatever the fact may be as to that, the fact is certain that the worship of the Catholic Church holds fast to the truth that God is Three Persons in One Divine Nature and that this Trinity is the only ultimate object of worship, and is, in the last analysis, what we mean by God.

Our belief in the Presence of whole Christ in any and every particle of the sacred Species accounts for our belief in the validity of the Communion administered in one kind. From the earliest times the Church reserved the Blessed Sacrament for the purpose of communicating those who for any reason were unable to be present at the celebration of the Mass. In the first stage of the history of the Church reservation was not primarily for the sick but for the absent. It was assumed that all

Christians intended and wanted to be present at Mass whenever it was celebrated and to make their communions and that if they were not present it was because they were unfortunately hindered by obstacles they could not overcome. Their needs were provided for by the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament and the reservation was commonly in one kind. As zeal declined reservation became more and more for the sick. To-day this is true, that reservation is under one kind and that the Church has never doubted the validity of such reservations, nor the desirability of it.

To-day in our communion reservation of the Blessed Sacrament for the sick has made its way, and most opposition of it has ceased. The opposition to reservation which still exists takes the form of opposition to reservation for worship. Such opposition reveals on the part of those who make it a defective understanding of the Real Presence. When brought to the test of action they do not believe that Jesus Christ, God and man, is personally present in the sacrament. Otherwise they could not refrain from worshipping. Those who believe the teaching of the Catholic Church as to the Eucharist of necessity want that our Lord should be always accessible in His sacramental Presence to the worship of the faithful. The further question of the desirability of services of sacramental worship raises further considerations. I can understand that one who believes in the Real Presence might for one reason or another not desire the introduction of such services as Exposition and Benediction. They are Western services, of comparatively late origin, intended to bring home to the faithful the reality of the sacramental Presence and to lead them to such acts as shall aid in the development of their spiritual experience.

Putting aside questions of legality, which are debatable, they seem to me, when brought to the test of experience, to prove themselves vastly helpful; and because they are spiritually helpful such services will no doubt more and more establish themselves as part of the devotional life of the Church. When it becomes clear to those who oppose this sacramental cultus that what those who are practicing it are actually doing is offering their adoration to the Blessed Trinity under a special mode of its manifestation the opposition will no doubt die away and such cultus be accepted as a normal part of the Church life as other at one time strange devotions have been accepted. Nothing that really develops the devotional life of a number of people is to be rejected merely on the ground that it is novel in our experience.

When belief in the Real Presence, which justifies the reservation and administration of the blessed sacrament under one kind, led the Latin Church to adopt the administration of communion in one kind to the laity this action was taken for certain grave practical reasons which seemed to the Western Church to be sufficient grounds for such action. The right of the Western Church to take such action has been vigorously disputed and denied on the ground that the Church cannot set aside that which was instituted by our Lord. This is not the place to argue the question. I can only say that to me the grounds of Western action seem sufficient, and the action itself to be within the authority of the Church. With us for long, the question has been purely theoretical, but circumstances are now bringing it into prominence as a practical question. Theories of the transmission of disease through contact have led many persons to shrink from communicating from a common chalice, and we are

told in many cases to withdraw from communion. The case becomes acute under the circumstance of hospitals and sanatoriums, where it is more and more felt that the ordinary mode of administration is impossible.

These circumstances have led to the adoption in certain cases of measures which are, from a Catholic standpoint, utterly intolerable; such as individual communion cups, or the administration of the dipped Species placed in the hand of the Communicant. Either form of administration is impossible to one believing in the Real Presence, as for them it exposes our Lord to irreverent treatment. Administration of the dipped Species placed in the mouth of the recipient is possible, but not very convenient, especially in the case of numerous communions. The alternative is the adoption of the Western use, opposition to which seems to be based, with the exception of those who insist on the inability of the Church to change the mode of our Lord's institution, on the fact that it is Western and Roman, an objection which would not seem to have much cogency. The type of mind which rejects any action because "it is just like the Catholics" can be safely disregarded. It is obvious that something will have to be done to meet the difficult circumstances with which we are faced, and it is equally obvious that the things which have been done are intolerable from a Catholic point of view. It would seem that the practical thing to do at first, while public opinion in the Church is being shaped, would be to permit the laity to receive in one kind if they saw fit. This is no doubt somewhat of an anarchical suggestion, but a little more anarchy in the Protestant Episcopal Church would seem negligible.

As considerations of a possible profanation of the Blessed Sacrament were an important element in the

determination to withdraw the cup from the laity, so do such considerations underly the provision for fasting as a necessary element in the preparation for the priest to celebrate the Mass, and for the faithful to make their communions. One of the chief signs of the laxity which ensued in the Anglican Church after the Reformation was the neglect of all ascetic practices, and especially the neglect to fast before receiving the Blessed Sacrament. That neglect has been somewhat rectified during the last seventy-five years, but non-fasting reception is far too common to-day. And it is a little difficult to understand how such neglect should have grown up and prevailed in a Church which has insisted so strenuously upon the primitive character of its discipline. We most of us have had teachers who very vehemently justified the position of the Anglican Church on the ground of its pure and primitive character. Such insistence is absurd and self-stultifying, unless the primitive practice is to be followed as well as praised. One understands the Protestant opposition, which analyses down to the denial of all authority save that of individual taste. One fails to understand the position of those who appeal to the past as against something they do not like, and at the same time decline the past when it presents them with something they do not want to do. Primitive practice certainly contains the obligation of fasting as a preparation for the reception of the Sacrament. If Benediction is modern and Roman, fasting is certainly primitive and Catholic.

And it is the sort of practice that at once approves itself to the devout mind. One does not care to approach the Blessed Sacrament as though it were a common thing which required no preparation on our part. Spiritual preparation? Yes—certainly, but until we attain the

status of pure spirit, which at present seems far off, we need bodily preparation as well. No one would dispute this in the case of exterior bodily cleanliness. No one would go to the Lord's Table in a state that he would regard as improper in the case of his own table. Everyone must recognize the suitability of the priest's ablution before handling the sacred Species. But fasting is merely an extension of the same principle. We fast as a form of self-discipline and purity before approaching the altar. It is, too, a symbol of the entire bodily discipline which is requisite in the practice of the Christian life. "I keep my body under and bring it into subjection," S. Paul says. Everyone knows the difficulty of bodily discipline and the discipline of the fast before communion is, as it were, the symbol of an offered and sacrificed life. In a time of unbridled bodily indulgence, when luxury runs mad, fasting has the value of a protest against predominance of the flesh. I feel I am rather overstraining the matter, not from the point of view of its importance as a religious practice, but from the point of view of its difficulty as a piece of discipline. After all the practice of fasting before communion does not involve so much of self-denial as to justify us in making it a work of great merit.

One great value of practices is that they aid us in the appreciation of what we are doing. Ceremonial has that quality and therefore the world has never found itself able to dispense with it. All orderly life is of necessity ceremonial. The dinner, the reception, the ball, the Presidential reception, the presentation at Court, each have their carefully worked out plan. Their value is that they impress, as mere words do not, the nature of the action in which we are participating. So the ceremonies and

practices which surround the Mass and the communion have this same value of impressing upon the human mind, so ready to wander off from its present occupation into dreams and fancies, the seriousness and the sanctity of the act in which it is engaged. The following of the ceremonial of the Mass keeps us aroused to the sacrificial action. The genuflexions and the crossings bring home the reality of the worship. We live through the Mass in an aroused state. At the climax of the action the sound of the bell calls us to lay our intention on the altar where the victim is manifested in the veiled Presence, and to worship Him who is present, though invisible. And when we draw near to the altar to receive into our bodies and souls the Divine Presence; when, in this supreme moment, we enter into union with the Blessed Trinity, we desire before all things to be ready in body and in soul for the reception of so wonderful a guest. "Blessed is He that cometh," we have said, and now He comes and makes us one with Him who has become one with us. So we go back to our place, conscious that for these few moments we are living tabernacles of the Most High God, eager to lose ourselves in adoration of Him.

THE TWENTY-FOURTH MEDITATION
THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION:
THE BENEFITS

Belief in the real presence results in the most minute and scrupulous care in the handling of the Blessed Sacrament. In addition to the large altar cloth a small, square linen called the corporal is spread in the center of the altar, and the Host and chalice and paten are always kept on this. Before the ablutions the corporal is scraped with the paten, to take up any small particles, and these are brushed into the chalice. The corporal and the purificator (the linen with which the chalice is dried) are rinsed out in water which is poured into the *sacrarium*, a sink or basin which drains into the ground and not into the common sewer. From the moment of consecration until the ablutions the celebrant, except when he is actually handling the Host, keeps the thumb and first finger of each hand joined, lest he drop and scatter any of the tiny particles which may cling to them. Every act and motion of the priest is minutely worked out and directed, the result of centuries of growth, and all governed by a practical consideration,—the greatest possible reverence towards the Body and Blood of our Saviour.

There are similar precautions in administering holy communion to the people. According to ancient custom, still maintained in the Roman Church and never entirely disused in the Church of England, a long cloth, called the *houselling cloth*, is stretched along the communion rail and is held up beneath the chin by each communicant, to catch any particle which may be dropped. In primitive days the Host was placed on the communicant's hand. Experience showed that this often led to accidents, and by the sixth century the custom arose, and gradually became universal, of placing the Host directly on the tongue of the communicant. This method of receiving is safer and more reverent, for it does away with the danger of the communicant unintentionally carrying away and dropping small particles which are likely to adhere to the hand.

Let us listen to the words of our Lord:

He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.

Let us picture:

HWARD in a hospital. See the rows of white beds, in each a sufferer, restless or patient, as the case may be. Everything here is white, the color of purity. Great care is taken to secure material cleanliness; all the resources of science are brought to bear on the work of preventing material infection; but much of the disease here is due primarily not to anything material at all, it is the result of spiritual corruption. Science cannot deal with that. Is there anything that can deal with it?

Behind that carefully arranged screen in the corner there, which the nurse seems to be guarding, there is a bed, and in the bed a dying man. The nurse will tell you the scientific name of the disease that is killing him, if you want to know. But it will be only a scientific, that is, a material and superficial account of the case. In reality, the man is dying of sin. He is finding out that the wages of sin is death—in the first place, this unimportant death which is the severance of soul and body. He has made up his mind to that; but there is a death beyond this bodily death that he wants to avoid. Therefore he has been making his confession to the priest who is standing over him and has received the absolution of God. And now he is receiving the Gift of God which all his life he has scorned and neglected. He has heard

the words, take, eat; the Presence has entered into his soul and he is filled with a new vigor—the vigor of eternal life. Have you ever stood by the bed of one dying and seen the Presence that passes to the soul reflect itself back on the very features of the dying? Have you seen it look out of the eyes in a glow of joy and peace? Picture a priest, standing by a bed in a hospital, putting the Wafer between the pallid lips and saying, take, eat.

Consider, first,

That men cannot live by bread alone; even in this world, even in a life materially conditioned, there are needs which the material world cannot satisfy. Sometimes we succeed in burying these deep under the daily occupations of life; sometimes we stifle them by means of the amusement by which we keep ourselves from thinking; sometimes we mock them by giving them a pseudo-spiritual food; but always they are there, and always they refuse to be satisfied with any of these things. One finds people in church wondering what this mysterious offering of the Eucharist may be. One finds them gazing at the light before the Tabernacle, drawn apparently by the unseen Presence, and feeling some unwonted emotion stirring in their souls. One finds them in some great sorrow, when the trivialities which they have thought the important things of life have failed them, and they have come to find that they have souls hungry and empty. We find them above all when the hand of death is laid upon them. It is a terrible thing to see—this waking to emptiness when the dream of life's fulness and completeness breaks and the mirage of this world begins to melt and vanish, and there is nothing to lay hold of that is eternal as the soul is eternal. It is ter-

rible to see the man who but now was rejoicing in his full barns hear the whisper in the darkness, Thou fool! But it is good if the whisper come even then; if there emerge a neglected, almost forgotten Form from the darkness, which holds out a hand and says, "Son, return even now to the Father who waits and has not despaired." The Table of God is always spread, and the heralds of the feast run ceaselessly through the highways and hedges, through the streets and lanes of earth, bidding those who have forgotten and those who linger, those who have been deceived and those who deceive themselves, come to the wedding. The Table of God is always spread—sometimes on the very edge of our graves.

Consider, second,

That we ourselves who are here have heard the call and have come to sit often at the Table. We are frequent and familiar guests; what is it that we take away with us? For our Eucharist is not only a sacrifice that we offer, nor a Presence that we apprehend by faith, but a feast of which we partake. And we partake of it *unto eternal life*, that the life which is Divinity itself may enter into us and transfigure us and transform us and assimilate us to Himself that hereafter we may dwell in Him and He in us. We go out from our Eucharistic feast Christ-possessed: we go out therefore with a new attitude toward life. Every new Communion ought to intensify in us the conviction that the vital values of life are those through which it manifests the received Presence. One fears sometimes that our conception of our Communions is that of seeking the relief or fulfilment of some present need. That, of course, is a true aspect of them; but is it adequate? Is it not rather that we seek such an union

with our Blessed Lord that our lives shall exhibit an ever-deepening response to His will? That we may have a truer perception of the meaning of that will and a more perfect response to it? That we may come to understand through our Partaking of the Humanity of our Lord, that "This is the will of God, even our sanctification," and that sanctification means that the whole of our nature responds to His action? The satisfaction of our need of Him is but one side of the eucharistic self-giving of our Lord: the other side is our satisfaction of His need of us through our own self-giving. A true union means that two are satisfied, not one. There is not one who gives and one who receives, but there are two who meet in mutual self-oblation. That we may evermore dwell in Him cannot be a fact until He dwells in us.

Let us, then, pray,

That our approach to the sacrificial feast may be with the devout endeavour to give as well as to receive. Pray, that our Lord may manifest Himself in all our life.

Believing that we have received from the Holy Altar the Body and Blood of Christ our Lord and God, let us pray to the Unity of the Blessed Trinity that it may be granted to us evermore, in the fulness of faith, to hunger and thirst after righteousness; and that we, being strengthened with the grace of the saving Food, may so do His work, that we may possess the sacrament that we have received, not for judgment, but for healing; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

THE HOLY COMMUNION: THE BENEFITS

What all who receive the Holy Communion receive is Jesus Christ, God and Man. Through His mediatorial

manhood they are brought into union with His divine Person. And because that Person is a Person of the Holy Trinity they are also brought into intimacy of relation with the Trinity itself. All who receive the sacrament receive the same matter of the sacrament, but all do not receive it with the same effect. What the effect of the sacrament is depends upon the spiritual state of the recipient. That which is offered is in all cases the same, because the Presence depends upon the act of consecration, not on the state of the communicant. Therefore also because the Presence in the sacrament is dependent upon the consecration by the priest, and not on the faith of the communicant, that which is received is in all cases the same, but the result in the soul of the communicant, what is called the benefit of the sacrament, depends upon the receptivity of the person receiving. It is not true that the unfaithful communicant, the communicant in a state of mortal sin, receives nothing; that in his case the sacramental action finds no effect, is not even accomplished. Rather the gift which is offered as blessing is turned to condemnation by the unworthiness of the communicant. If the result of an unworthy communion were merely negative, there would be no meaning in the words of S. Paul, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's Body." Nor to the echo of these words in the Exhortation in the Book of Common Prayer, its words of solemn warning that because the holy sacrament is "so divine and comfortable a thing to them that receive it worthily, and so dangerous to those who will presume to receive it unworthily," that there is "great peril of the unworthy receiving thereof."

That which is intended for spiritual life is turned

to spiritual death in the souls of the unworthy. Hence the continual pressure of Catholic teaching in the direction of careful preparation on the part of the communicant. Hence, too, the insistence in Catholic practice of the reception of the holy communion at the early Mass. The early Mass is no doubt intended to make one element of preparation easier, and for many possible, the element of fasting. Our discouragement of communions at the late Mass is strictly speaking abnormal, but has become a necessity under our conditions. The priest feels that he must not only do what he can to protect the sacrament from profanation, but that also he must do what he can to protect people from themselves, from the consequence of their own ignorance or carelessness. One cannot calmly contemplate the crowds of communicants who go forward at mid-day to receive at the altar in many churches, practically all of them unfasting, and many certainly quite unprepared. I understand, of course, that the questions will be raised "How do you know this? What right have you to judge?" One does not know, and does not attempt to judge in the individual case, but it does not take many years of experience in the ministry to be certain as to the general fact.

The fear of unworthy reception no doubt keeps a certain number of persons from the sacrament, and those for the most part who ought not to entertain the fear. They will be morbidly sensitive souls with a diseased self-consciousness. The fear that is aroused by the suspicion of one's unworthiness and the spiritual danger of reception should not delay anyone from reception for any longer than is required for one to be placed in a state of grace. The fear of unworthiness should not keep one from the altar, but send one to the confessional.

There is no need for anyone to remain in a state of sin any longer than he wants to. So long as one chooses to remain in a state of sin the altar is closed. But when one repents, the way of approach is again opened.

The question is sometimes raised as to whether S. Paul is not indulging in exaggerated language when he speaks of those who are "weak and sickly among you" as the result of an unworthy communion. One cannot judge of the physical effects of unworthy reception, though one may be morally certain that they exist. One can judge better of the disaster of spiritual weakness and death which overtakes the unworthy communicant. The priest becomes morally certain that a large part of the falling away from the communion, the spectacle of which is so bitter a part of his experience, is due to unworthy communions, or the fear of them. There are such things as dead souls. We think of the spiritual life which is the outcome of our relation with God as lasting at any rate as long as we live. Theoretically, of course, this is true. Theoretically there is always time for repentance in this life, but one is convinced that it is not always individually true; that there are numbers of men and women who have committed spiritual suicide long before they physically died, whose probation has ended in the definite rejection of God. There is no other way of accounting for the spiritual impenetrability of the souls one often meets, to whom all things spiritual are a closed book, pages written in a language which is unintelligible to them. These are not commonly great criminals, who have forfeited the spiritual life through mortal sins of the sort that society condemns. Rather they are great egoists, who have rejected God through pride. It is of them that our Lord said, "If you were blind you should

have no sin, but because ye say we see your sin remaineth." They are the victims of an intellectual self-sufficiency, who commit that sin for which there is no absolution because there is no repentance. There is nothing in this world more awful than the spectacle of the self-complacent soul that "hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted the blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace." They are souls that are condemned already, "because they have not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Let us turn to pleasanter thoughts, to the other aspect of the reception of the Blessed Sacrament. Sacraments are not ordained to condemnation but to sanctification. Jesus Christ, the unique gift of the Eucharist, offers Himself to be our special life and strength, and He does not so offer Himself solely to saints, but to all who aspire to sanctity, to all who will to live near Him, even to those whose will so to live is immature and undefined. It is precisely because the Holy Communion is not the ground of sanctity, but a means of it, that it is urged so constantly upon all men of good will. The benefit of it is that it is an aid to grow up into Him in all things who is the Head, even Christ.

Assuming, therefore, that there is no bar of mortal sin, and that there is a real desire for our Lord, we draw near with faith, looking to Him to accomplish His will in us, trusting that "He who hath begun a good work in us will continue up until the day of Christ." Let us emphasize once more the fact that the growth of the

soul in sanctity is the God-intended, and therefore normal, course of its development. It is no part of the Divine purpose that we shall fall into sin and then be rescued with difficulty. The will of God from the beginning is "our sanctification." And because the Holy Communion is the chief instrument of sanctification, no one should be kept back from it who is not willingly in sin. It is the clearly expressed mind of the Church that little children should be brought to the altar. "Ye are to take care that this child shall be brought to the bishop to be confirmed so soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and is sufficiently instructed in the other parts of the Catechism set forth for this purpose." So the Church speaks to the sponsors. And confirmation is not for "grown folk" but for "those who are baptized and come to years of discretion," that is, to years of responsibility for conduct. Surely if there is any truth in our sacramental theory, children are to be brought to our Lord not only in baptism, but in confirmation and the Holy Communion. In the light of Church History, late confirmation and communion are so obviously un-Catholic practices that they are indefensible. The obvious answer to those who say that the child "does not know what it is doing" is that it is not doing anything, but is having something done to it. It is offering itself to be the tabernacle of God, and I am quite sure that many children of eight years old are better capable of that than their world-soiled fathers and mothers.

We define the gift of the sacrament as Grace. We come to receive the grace of God, we say, or to be assisted by the grace of the communion. It is well for us to be clear what we mean by this word Grace, which is so vital a word in the Christian system and the key to the

understanding of our whole relation to God. Let us put it plainly in this way, that ultimately grace is not a *thing*, but a *person*. That by sacramental grace, or sanctifying grace, we really mean that God Himself has come into the soul. The devout communicant possesses grace, or possesses God: it is the same thing. To put it otherwise, grace is not something done to us, but someone doing something to us and therefore to be in a state of grace is the equivalent of saying that we are in a state of union with God, ultimately with God the Blessed Trinity.

To be in a state of grace is to be in union with God. This state of union began at our baptism and if we have lived a normal Christian life, a life, that is, as God wants and wills it, we have never lost that Grace, or been out of union with God. It is much to be desired that we should face the reality of our baptism and what it meant and to-day means to be made a member of Christ, the child of God and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven, what it means to be a partaker of the Divine nature and to be in union with God. Understand this, and meditate upon it till the meaning has laid hold on you: "in baptism God gave Himself to me."

Perhaps we have to see our lives through a history of failure and sin, of lapses and restorations, which complicate our problems. Let us then put before us in imagination a child of seven or eight years who cannot have sinned mortally. God gave Himself to this child when he was baptized and God still possesses this child in union with Himself and this child possesses God as the life of its soul. It is in a state of sanctifying, or habitual, grace. No doubt it begins to meet temptation, the struggle with sin, but its temptations have not yet torn it from

the embrace of the divine arms that still encircle it. Cannot we strengthen that divine embrace? Cannot we fortify this soul which has to meet the temptations of life, and is capable of turning away from God to the world? Look at that little child; your child, it may be. Do you really want to help it?

If so you will see that that child, your child it may be, or your godchild, receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, "the manifold gifts of Grace," to strengthen it in its warfare. This gift of the Holy Spirit is also the gift of God. The body is consecrated by the Divine Presence and becomes a temple wherein God abides, unless He be "grieved" by sin, driven away. But we have not to dwell on Confirmation here further than to point out how richly God provides for the welfare of the soul.

God has another gift for this child,—your child, who perhaps you are holding back from confirmation or the Holy Communion because "it is not old enough,"—the gift of His Son. God gives Himself in Baptism; in the Holy Communion He completes His work by giving the God-man. What God in the Holy Communion is offering to this child is Jesus Christ, the Saviour of its soul. Is it necessary that this child should be fourteen or fifteen years old before it can receive the gift? Should it not receive the gift as soon as the contest with evil grows active in the soul? One thinks of the multitudes of little children whom Christ invites to come, who themselves would eagerly come; but the disciples still rebuke those who would bring them and withhold them from the embrace of Jesus. "This is the will of God even your sanctification." The will of man refuses to trust the will of God.

As we study the mechanism, so to call it, of the Chris-

tian life, the meaning of sacramental action becomes clear to us. It all looks to the one end; "that we may evermore dwell in Him and He in us." Such is our Lord's prayer for us. "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." However, this is a manifold and intensifying union which shall ultimately embrace all our nature and bring the whole man to the possession of God. God is not content to incorporate us into Himself at our Baptism, but He goes on to incorporate Himself into us in the Holy Communion. He wills to possess us wholly. We are spirits and we are united to Him spiritually; but also we are bodies and are united to Him corporally in the Holy Communion. It is impossible for us to conceive anything beyond the completeness of this union wherein those sinful bodies, which have been made clean by His Body, and those souls, which have been washed through His most precious Blood, are sustained in Him as His living members. I suppose it is the very impossibility of taking in all that is involved in such a union that has made men shrink from accepting it and trying to find some way of understanding the Eucharist which imposes a lesser strain. But surely we do not want a lesser strain. We will try to face the reality of our Lord's words, "Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise Him up at the last day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him." That is the divine fact. We will hold fast to that with all its consequences, while over-

whelmed by the wonder of it we exclaim with S. Paul, "It is too much, that love wherewith He loved us."

Ah, one comes back to the fact again and again because it is impossible to exhaust its meaning. This fact of the Presence of God in us and we in God is the very essence of Christianity and all other conceptions of Christianity fade and grow dim before it. I am one with God, with a union renewed and intensified as day by day I make my communion; a union which grows and deepens, not because God offers Himself in greater fullness or with more generosity as I go on in the spiritual life, but just because I am going on and am reaching to the Divine Presence I am growing in receptivity. It is not the divine offer that has increased, but my capacity to receive it has deepened. That is what I mean by growing in grace, growing in receptivity, growing in ability to use God, for God gives Himself to me to use. He puts His omnipotence at my disposal. I can avail myself of the power of God for the working out of my own problems. "I can do all things through Christ, Who strengtheneth me." This is no theory, no dream, but the secret of the life of the saints. They live the life that they do because of the life of Christ in them. This is S. Paul's, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in Me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." This is the life of every saint, a life built up out of the life of indwelling God which increases in sanctity in proportion as the life of God is assimilated.

The sacramental presence of our Lord in us is of limited duration. It passes with the dissolution of the sacred Species which are its medium. For a limited time we are living tabernacles and can worship the divin-

ity Who has so wonderfully come to us. In the light of this fact we cannot but feel how desirable it is that one who has received the Holy Communion should remain in quiet worship, in as great recollection as possible, for some moments after the reception. One makes one's thanksgiving and lingers as long as may be in the church, dwelling upon the gift of God to us. The common practice of rushing from the church as soon as the Blessing is given may be explained in some cases by the pressure of daily duties, but in many cases must be unnecessary and imply an imperfect apprehension of the continued presence of God in us. Is it not true that the results of our communion will depend in some measure upon our reception of the Divine Guest? If we remain for a time in silent communion with Him, listening attentively for His voice, we are more likely to know His will and to receive His guidance. The conduct of the spiritual life, so we are apt to feel, requires strenuous exertion on our part. And this is true; but it is also true that we must give ourselves time to learn what God expects from us. Most of us would be better if we listened more than we do. "I will hearken what the Lord God will say unto my soul." "The Lord is in His holy temple,"—ye are the temple of God,—"let all the earth keep silence before Him." The ceasing of the sacramental Presence does not deprive us of the Presence of God. There remains that which is effected by the sacramental Presence, the state of habitual, or sanctifying grace, which is the constant action of God upon the soul that is in union with Him. The reiterated sacramental action through the repetition of our communions increases, we say, this grace. Perhaps it would be well to

say that it stimulates us to further response to the grace of God. God cannot be any more present, but we can constantly be more responsive to His Presence. In this response lies the secret of our spiritual success or failure. The unambitious Christian tends to erect a certain standard of accomplishment and therewith rest content. The strain of constant pressing on is too much for him spiritually, for it wearies him. How many souls there are who appear to be satisfied with what someone has described as a very moderate spiritual patrimony. They resemble the merchant, who, having accumulated what he considers a sufficient income for his needs, retires from business and devotes himself to such matters as interest him: the pursuit of some scientific hobby, the care of his country place, or even the raising of puppies. He is free from business cares and does not wish to accumulate further. So there are many "retired Christians" who have a sufficient religious practice to satisfy their moderate spiritual aspirations and are inclined to rest there. The trouble is that while you may invest in an annuity and secure yourself a settled income for life, it does not seem possible to maintain a spiritual income at a given level without further exertion. We may settle the standard, confessing so often, communicating so many times a month, but the income of grace will not produce results automatically. No doubt the sacraments produce their appropriate results, *ex opere operato*, but our spiritual profit depends upon our use of what is conferred. The reception of the Holy Communion brings the Presence to the soul whatever may be the state of the soul, but what will be the effect of the Presence, whether for life or for death, will depend very much on

the state of the soul, and where the soul is not in a state of mortal sin it must still exert itself to appropriate the grace offered.

And the state of soul I have been describing, the state which lacks spiritual ambition, is not one to derive much profit from its sacramental experience. Analysis will commonly show that its languor is due to a state of tolerated venial sin which, like a slow fever, is not mortal but keeps vitality at a low ebb. Under such conditions spiritual strength does not stay stationary, as is fondly hoped, but steadily declines. It is not rare to observe the phenomena of such decline. We meet a person whose sacramental experience is very real and seems to have every prospect of deepening and strengthening. There is an obvious pushing on towards more complete spiritual accomplishments. Then ambition dies out. A certain standard of action is adopted, but it is soon observable that it is not steadily maintained. There is a falling off here, a decline there, a yielding of the ideal elsewhere, at first in intention only temporary, but with increasing frequency. Then it may be there is a sudden drop, a collapse into sin, into indifference, into coldness, into unbelief. Or any of these effects may be gradually reached. The thing to be noted is that the critical point was not when the person obviously gave way to temptation, but the point at which ambition failed and an attempt was made to standardize the spiritual life. But just because the spiritual life is life it cannot be held at a given level of attainment which is sufficient for salvation and is a safe spiritual investment, beyond which all is voluntary and an affair of saints, rather than of "ordinary Christians." We have only to state the theory to feel its fallacy.

Our increasing communions are signs of spiritual activity on our part. Through these our spirit becomes energetic in its attempt to embrace God. It fills the need of the Divine cooperation in its life and seeks to attain it. And God is always ready to give Himself, and His readiness may be taken as evidence for our need. That God has willed that the sacrifice should be daily offered in the Church and that the Holy Communion should each day be distributed to the faithful is a sufficient indication of God's mind as to frequent communion. It is a strange comment on the "progress of Christianity" and "the growth of the Church" that there are still so few parishes in our Communion where the mind of God and the directions of His Church are followed by the daily celebration of the Holy Communion. And perhaps it is as strange, and as discouraging, to find in those places where there is the daily offering there is so slight a response to the invitation of God. The spiritual lassitude of Christendom is easily measured by the attendance on the altar. "There are so many who would like to come who cannot come." True, but it is an odd theory to be asked to accept that those who would come cannot and that those who can come will not. One can hardly think life so unfortunately divided. Our neglect of opportunity is startling.

There is another aspect of Holy Communion that we may touch upon for a moment. That is its cleansing action. It purifies the soul. There is of course no foundation for the common belief in the Anglican Communion that the Holy Communion is an absolution from sin, which may be substituted for the absolution of the Sacrament of Penance. The profitable reception of the communion requires that the recipient be in a state of

grace. The spiritually dead soul, that is, the soul in a state of mortal sin, can only receive "condemnation, not discerning the Lord's Body." But assuming the state of grace, the effect of the Presence is the cleansing and refreshing of the soul. The forgiveness of sin does not destroy all the work of sin and restore the soul to a perfectly sound state any more than the ceasing of a fever means the immediate restoration of all our physical power. In either case the person freed from the power of disease, spiritual or physical, enters a period of convalescence in which the health and normal operation of the power is gradually restored. This spiritual convalescence, which is due to the weakening action of sin, which is the temporal penalty of sin, is hastened by the effect of the sacrament. The wounds of sin are healed. The wounded spiritual powers are re-vitalized and new supplies of grace strengthen the soul. Without the sacrament of the altar, the soul, though forgiven, would often remain in a state of spiritual invalidism. It would recover slowly, if at all, its normal strength, and would remain exposed to the assaults of temptation without its needed protection.

The cleansing power of the Eucharist is no doubt effective in the case of earnest and obedient communicants in doing away with the results of venial sin. Venial sin is forgiven as to its guilt, through contrite prayer and through good works and through the action of the sacrament itself. As we are constantly exposed to venial sin, and as none of us are so thorough in our watchfulness and spiritual alertness as to wholly avoid it, we need that we shall be constantly cleansed. The pipes of any water system tend to silt up by the constant deposit of solid matter in them and have to be kept

clear by constant cleansing else will the water supply be gradually reduced. So in the life of grace the constant occurrence of venial sin tends to silt up the channels of approach to our soul and those channels have to be kept clear by the action of grace. This action is one element in the effect of the Eucharist and one ground for our constant reception of it. If we are in a state of mortal sin we do not receive until we have repented and received sacramental absolution, but if we are in a state of venial sin we can make our acts of contrition and love and draw near with confidence to receive the Divine gift of the Eucharist. We receive therewith the strengthening and repaired powers and the refreshing of our languid spirit. The Church Catechism expresses this fact accurately when it teaches that the benefits of which we partake in the Holy Communion are "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the Body and Blood of Christ as our bodies are by the bread and wine."

So partaking we grow in grace. That is, we grow into ever closer union with Him Who ultimately is Grace. The perfect man, who is our ideal end, is attained by such a process of growth. We do not first grow and then feed, but we first feed and then grow; grow in proportion to the intensity of our feeding. Jesus is the children's Bread, and does not refuse to any the sustenance of His life-giving Flesh and Blood. And we never outgrow this food, or pass beyond the need of it. Our Lord said to S. Augustine, "I am the Food of the full-grown, be a man and thou shalt feed upon Me." The food of the strong, the Bread of Heaven, supplies to the spiritual needs of the elect.

O salutaris hostia,
Quæ cœli pandis ostium,

Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer auxilium.

Uni trinoque Domino
Sit sempiterna gloria
Qui vitam sine termino
Nobis donet in patria.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH MEDITATION
THE AGNUS DEI

When the Prayer of Consecration is ended the celebrant recites the Lord's Prayer. This is followed by a prayer for deliverance from all evils, at the intercession of all the saints. Then comes the solemn rite of the *Fraction*, as our Lord at the Last Supper took bread and *broke* it. The large Host is broken in two, vertically, and with a fragment taken from the left half the celebrant makes the sign of the cross thrice over the chalice, saying, "The peace of the Lord be always with you." The particle is then placed in the chalice. This ceremony, called the *Commixture*, is found in all rites. After the Commixture the *Agnus Dei* is said, and then three prayers,—for unity, for deliverance from all sin and evil, and for a worthy reception of the Blessed Sacrament. At requiems the petition in the *Agnus Dei* is changed to "Grant them rest," and the prayer for unity is omitted. Then the celebrant, as an act of humility and contrition, strikes his breast three times, saying each time, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my soul shall be healed" (see Matt. viii, 8), and makes his communion.

It has been the ordinary custom in the Western Church, for many centuries, for the priest to say Mass every day; but there is no rule requiring him to do so. In the Eastern Church the clergy celebrate much less frequently. Early in the middle ages it was found necessary to forbid any priest saying Mass oftener than once a day. Otherwise there was obvious danger of abuses in connection with the receiving of fees for requiem or other votive Masses. According to the present Western canons the following exceptions are allowed. Every priest has the privilege of saying three Masses on Christmas and on All Souls' day. On Sundays and other days of obligation he may say a second Mass if, otherwise, a considerable number of the faithful would be deprived of the opportunity of hearing Mass.

Let us listen to the words of our Lord:

It is finished.

Let us picture:

GHE darkness which fell over Calvary. One pictures it coming on slowly, almost imperceptibly. Objects grow unexpectedly dim, lose their outline, vanish. Men—the onlookers at Calvary—wonder why it has become dark and turn and go home and are lost in the strange gloom before they reach there. The curious crowd about the Cross has melted away, only those stay whose business it is to stay—some representatives of the Jewish authorities who wish to see the tragedy to the end with, it may be, a little of uneasiness lest even now when success seems so sure there shall take place some sudden change and the unexpected happen—this darkness may have filled them with foreboding. The soldiers have lighted torches which burn spots through the darkness but cannot dispell it. The few Watchers about the Cross whom their great love detains at their post are so exhausted by the pain they have endured that to them the darkness is almost unnoticed. There are voices from time to time up there on the Crosses—curses and prayers. There are two souls entering upon their last fierce struggle with God; we hear them argue their case in their agony—how strange it sounds! Now there is a sharp cry from the central Cross—a cry of mingled agony and triumph: *It is finished!* and then a softer murmur,

Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit! And then the darkness drifts away and the three Crosses are once more visible to all. The Victim on the central Cross is dead. He came to save His people from their sins—and this is how He has done it! He has submitted himself to their power and they have done their worst to His innocent body. He has been led as a Lamb to the slaughter and poured out His life for others. Let us kneel here before the Cross and say: *O Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. O Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, grant us thy peace.*

Consider, first,

This darkness is typical of that darkness which was over all the world by reason of its sin, and this sacrifice is the fulfilment and the perfecting of all the sacrifices which men had devised to still their consciences disturbed by sin. As one looks back over the world, not only the Jewish world, but all the pagan world as well, one sees it through a crimson mist, it is everywhere red with blood. It is a tremendous fact, that self-judgment of man whereby he tried to see himself through the eyes of God. Human life everywhere is full of the sense of sin, of vain struggle to achieve in its place a sense of innocence. Man gives everything—strips himself naked of his best and dearest,—but the bite of conscience never ceases. He can neither rid himself of his sense of wickedness nor drug himself into insensibility to it. There are no waters of forgetfulness which will wash it away. But he never gives over his attempt, he never ceases to hope for deliverance, he never loses his confidence that deliverance there will be. The earth is covered with altars whereon there lie strange

victims ; but none of them bring alleviation that is permanent. Even in the worshippers about those altars where the sacrifices are of divine enactment there remains a haunting dissatisfaction, a feeling that the blood of bulls and of goats can never take away sin. But here at length is a sacrifice which shall prove satisfying ; here at length is blood outpoured which brings a conviction of cleansing. Here is the Lamb of God which does not prefigure and promise forgiveness but which actually takes away the sin of the world. The Blood which drips on Calvary from this naked victim is the Blood that speaks better things than that of Abel, is the Blood which is not typical and shadowing reality, but is the Blood of the New Covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Consider, second,

That our hymn of adoration and supplication which here breaks into the eucharistic service is the expression of our conviction that the purpose of God for man has been fulfilled and that we are free : free from all that old haunting terror of the uncleansed conscience which drove men even to the length of giving of the fruit of their bodies for the sin of their souls. We are free, free through the Blood of Jesus—that is what the Agnus means ! We have passed out of the darkness and are children of light and of the day. And if there rings still a note of pleading through our eucharistic hymn it is not because we doubt of the power and promise of the Blood, but because we feel so acutely our own weakness, because we distrust so the persistence of our will. This sacrifice is a sacrifice for all men in all time ; but we need to make it present to us ; we need to feel its promise warm about us, we want to

feel our spirits rise to it in glad response. The Presence of God always makes man feel his own imperfection, it always reveals to him his impurity. So here, as the Presence is manifested through the sacramental media, as we know that the Lord comes near to our souls, we cry out that those souls shall be seen by the Father only through the veil of the Blood of the Incarnate Son. We are not worthy—how that conviction comes to us again and again as the sacrificial ritual progresses; we are not worthy unless we are hidden in Thy worthiness and presented in Thee. It is not fear that possesses us as we draw near to take the Body and Blood of the Lord, rather reverent awe as of those who are invited to share in heavenly mysteries. Humbly we come but not distrustingly; we come with consciousness of our own weakness but relying on the infinite power which is offered us. We answer the divine invitation and take our way to the altar as those who having nothing yet possess all things.

Let us, then, pray,

That in our approach to the Blessed Sacrament we may never so disregard our sinfulness as to presume on the divine grace; nor so undervalue the divine grace as to doubt God's purpose for us.

O Lord, our God, great, eternal and wonderful in glory, who keepest covenant and promise for those who love Thee with their whole heart, who art the life of all, the help of those who flee to Thee, the hope of those who cry unto Thee; cleanse us from all our sins and from every thought displeasing to Thy purity; cleanse our bodies and souls, our hearts and consciences, that with pure heart and clear mind, with perfect love and steadfast hope, we may approach Thy Sacrament, and be received

into union with Thee; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

THE AGNUS DEI

Kneeling here before the altar where the Sacrifice lies presented before God we take up the Agnus Dei, pleading that Sacrifice for ourselves and for the whole Catholic Church. We are thrown by the tremendous mystery of the act in which we are participating into an attitude of penitence induced by the sense of our own unworthiness. In this pause before communion we seek for recollection, for concentration of spirit on the meaning of our approaching participation in the Table of the Lord. God Incarnate, Who is already manifesting Himself upon the altar, whose personal Presence has been induced by the words of Consecration, is about to come to me, to constitute me His tabernacle. This is incredible,—but there are the promises of Christ! I lay hold upon them, my faith reaches out for the support of our Lord's own words. This is not bread—this that I am giving you is My Body, is My Blood, is Myself. That divine gift of God Himself I have come for. I want it for My whole being. I reach out My hand for it—“O Lamb of God that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me.”

The door stands open before us, the veil is torn away, the way into the Holiest is accessible. I have freedom of approach to the Father. This is what Christ's sacrifice has done for us, made it possible that we shall draw near, through the Blood of Christ. We have come. We have received. We have been made one. We have experienced the joy of the life of faith, and we now come

again. "O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us Thy peace."

What this sacrifice has accomplished for us is to make us one with God—made one by the Blood of the Cross. That which separates is removed. If we have been brought up in the Catholic faith and have never strayed from it, we lose something of the vividness of the contrast that there is between life out of God and life in God. We are insensible of the depth of the abyss that stretches between. We crossed it on the bridge of our baptism so long ago we are unconscious of the passage. The experience of the child who has crossed the ocean on a great liner in fair weather is one thing, and the experience of the sailor who has felt the vessel go down under him, and the waters close about him, and has been rescued after many hours clinging to a spar is another thing. And perhaps some of you have been caught off the wave-tossed spar when all hope has vanished and strength was at an end. God comes to us in many ways. In the unconsciousness of infancy He takes us in His arms and blesses us. From the wreckage of a mis-spent life He rescues us. Out of a life that seems to us at the time so full of joy and satisfaction He brings us to the knowledge of Himself. There is a wonderful vividness in S. Paul's description of this passage. "For when you were the servants of sin, you were free from righteousness. But what fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of these things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit into holiness and the end eternal life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." That is essentially what happens to

all of us whatever may be the details of experience. In Christ's rescue of us we have passed from death into life. That is what comes home to us now as we kneel here and repeat the Agnus. This sacrifice which has been offered, and of which we are about to partake, is an act of divine rescue, the gift of divine peace. We permit ourselves one glance backward to the tossing wreckage of the world ere we turn to rest ourselves on the Sacred Heart of our Deliverer. "O Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, grant us Thy peace."

"Ye were free from righteousness"—"but now being made free from sin and become the servants of God." What a contrast there is between these two kinds of freedom. And curiously, either kind of freedom is in reality servitude. You shake off the service of God only to become the servant of sin. God rescues you from that servitude to make you His own slave. Either way there is no freedom, in the way men are wont to conceive freedom. That is, there is no possibility of a life which is irresponsible, because there is no life without relations. We may try as impatiently as we will to escape from responsibility, but it is always there in some form. It will ultimately show itself in its results. "God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap."

But that freedom which is the service of God, and which is the liberty of God's children, is the highest and most perfect mode of freedom. That liberty which is bondage to sin is the revolt from nature, a defeating of nature's ends. S. Paul had no hesitation in applying this experience to his converts. "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death." That is our experience, is it not? If not our personal experience we can at least

look about us with open eyes. We can see the world full of wrecks; over-flowing prisons, crowded sanatoriums; the endless building of asylums for the insane, and these containing only the last stage of wreckage, the flotsam and jetsam of a self-seeking civilization. Minor results in unhappiness, in family dissensions and quarrels are many. Impaired health, and so on endlessly are perfectly familiar. There is no doubt of the root of these things. They are the wages of sin, the outcome of lives that have made themselves "free from righteousness," results oftentimes falling on those who were not responsible for them but were caught in the net of the iniquities of those who spoke great swelling words of liberty and are themselves the servants of corruption.

The service of God is perfect freedom, and that because it does not misuse or wound nature, but gives it opportunity for full development. It is through the service of God, and through that alone, that humanity can arrive at its ideal perfection. It is a life in which we can grow up into full-grown man "unto the measure and the stature of the fullness of Christ." It is quite useless to talk about human progress in any other terms than that. We have had millenniums of experience as to what humanity can do by itself and to what self-determination and living one's own life can accomplish. And the insane asylum and the prison and the sanatorium are the answer. And the population of these institutions has not been decreased by the advance of man in mechanical ingenuity. Rather it has been increased. The much vaunted mastery over nature has hitherto failed to yield any mastery over human nature, and bids fair to continue its failure through an indefinite future. There is but one way open to human progress in any desirable or

intellectual sense of that term, and that way lies through the service of God. God's servants as yet stand alone as those who have found the utmost capacity of humanity; who have been able to combine the knowledge and love of this world with the knowledge and love of God. The register of human progress is the calendar of the saints.

The plea to be free from authority is mere childishness and the results of the attempt to attain such freedom are sufficiently evident to enable us to form intelligent judgment upon them. To think only of the religious world, we are able now to look back on four centuries of the result of the reformation. Whatever grounds there may have been for desiring reformation and working for it, the results demonstrate that the Reformation achieved involved the spiritual disaster of Christendom. To-day the Christian world is paralyzed by its dissensions. In a morally collapsing society it is virtually impossible to exercise sufficient pressure on behalf of righteousness. Perhaps the sorriest spectacle in the whole scene is the prevalent Protestant preacher who waves his arms above the ruins his religion has wrought and shrieks, liberty, progress, humanity; words that are meaningless in his mouth.

It is irrelevant to point to the numbers of good works and holy lives which are to be found among the various divisions of Protestantism. They merely show what the Christian religion can do even where received under hampering conditions. What we are concerned with is not Christian survivals, no matter how wonderful, but the broad effect of the Reformation principles in disorganizing Christian society and in counteracting the proper effect on Christian forces. The operation of the fundamental principles of the Reformation, the abandon-

ment of authority in favor of private judgment, has certainly been disastrous, and Christendom lies wounded and broken as the result to-day. The Reformation failed utterly in that which it attempted to do, curb and reform the rapidly growing concentration of ecclesiastical power in the hands of the papacy. Rather it favored that concentration and through reaction aided in fastening on the Latin Church a theory of government which has made the reunion of Christendom all but impossible. Notwithstanding much talk of a reunion, the immediate future remains dark. Can we hope that the prevailing anarchy will, in the near future, force a new alignment of Christian forces, bring about the concentration of Christian forces in but two camps, unite in one body those who accept the faith once delivered to the saints and in another those to whom the faith is but a state of outgrown opinions; those who still, as the primitive Christians, of whom Pliny writes, "meet together to worship Christ as God" and those who see in Him but a well-meaning, though fundamentally mistaken, teacher, who yet had a "contribution" to make to the thought of the world which perhaps has not yet been outgrown?

"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Yes, we all want truth—at least we all think that we do. That is our common profession. But certain of the facts show that we do not all want the truth badly enough to spend much time and energy in the pursuit of it. It would seem that the average man or woman's notion of the pursuit of truth is satisfied with the reading of a magazine article, or of attending a lecture. He is quite convinced seemingly that the "truth" is not yet discovered, especially the truth about religion. So he frequently conducts his pursuit of it by the aid and guid-

ance of the latest sensationalist who has appeared before the public. "The plain man" listens with relief to the denunciation of the past and all its beliefs, which is the chief contribution to thought of the popular heresiarch. He feels thereupon that a still lingering sense of responsibility, which is the inheritance of his childhood's teaching, is finally removed. This teaching is, to be sure, as old as Cain, but the plain seeker after truth does not know it. He thus accepts as truth certain vague utterances about the freedom of thought, progress of the modern man, and so on, and goes home with the comfortable feeling that he has heard a satisfactory religion "with no nonsense or superstition about it," that is, one that imposes no obligation upon action.

"We want to know the truth. We are all seekers." But if we are all seekers we are probably also all dodgers. If we want to know some truths there are other truths that we do not want to know. It relieves us, no doubt, of a haunting sense of an ultimate responsibility to repudiate the past, but it is not likely that, however many mistakes the past has made, it is all wrong. Advance in knowledge is not by repudiating the past, but by perfecting it. Modern life and modern knowledge still rest on the primitive discoveries of the race. The men who invented airships and radiographs presuppose the men who discovered fire and the alphabet. We build upon the foundations laid by our ancestors, even when we perfect their work. And, spiritually speaking, we do not seem to be making any new discoveries, and it is hardly wise or safe to repudiate the past till we can substitute something better for it. It is difficult to see that Liberalism, as a religion, is superior to Catholicism, whatever may be its value as a spiritual shock-absorber. It may make life easier by

removing responsibilities, but it is doubtful if it makes it more intelligible to one who feels the keen pressure of life's problems. Ultimately it seems the seeking of a liberty which does not exist, and the effort to avoid truth which does exist. You are not free because you repudiated authority, but because you have assimilated truth. The character in a novel asks, "How do you get outside Law?" And the answer is, "By going inside yourself."

"If the Son has made you free then are you free indeed." The freedom that the Liberal seeks will readiest come through acceptance of the truth that he does not want to find. Through his acceptance of God, Who has not left the world to be directed spiritually by clever guesses as to its meaning. He has made a revelation of Himself. Our relation to God is not a sort of game in which the prize goes to the man who offers the best solution of the problems of life. It is a defined relation, made known by authority. Without that definition religion can only be the series of nervous reactions that Liberalism offers us to-day. The craving of the unsatisfied religious instinct can produce only an immense and unending restlessness, not a permanent peace.

There must be something gravely wrong with the religion which does not, and cannot, produce peace, at least in the individual soul. The very fact that a soul is restless is an indication of its spiritual failure. It may, to be sure, have made some progress, but it has attained no end. "The bosom of the Creator is the creature's home," S. Augustine said. And it is in our complete surrender to the Creator as our Alpha and Omega that we find both intellectual and spiritual satisfaction. There is no satisfaction out of God. And the endless seeking that finds nothing but itself is bitterness. We look to find God,

not opinions, as the end of our religion. And a living God, energetic in our lives, and not a frozen formula of Deism or Pantheism. Unless our religion can lead us through whatever doubts and inquietude to accomplishment and rest it means nothing and is inefficient. And God promises that it shall so lead. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires, and I will make thy windows of agates and thy gates of carbuncles and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."

Peace here is an attainable state, because it is a fruit of the Spirit, that Spirit who has been bestowed upon us, and of whom we are the temples. In other words, peace is an outgrowth of sanctifying grace and the indwelling presence of God. Here in the Agnus Dei it is related to the gift of God Himself. In our communions we expect as one result that the troubles and difficulties which we are bringing here to the altar will be stilled by the received Presence of God. It is well to remember that this character of Christian peace is not a thing of our own accomplishment but a supernatural creation, the result of our inherence in Christ. He is our Peace who has made peace by the blood of His Cross. He, entering us, will still there all the passions and desires which are wont to resist Him. He will calm and steady us by the pressure of His will. We have but to surrender, but to want, but to give our powers to Him in cooperation with His will, and He will cause peace to grow in us. And our lives become as the lives of those who are truly His children.

What is it that most interferes with our enjoyment of

peace? Speaking broadly I should say that it is precisely what we think will lead to and insure it, selfishness. Is it not true that we seek peace and happiness in the indulgence of passions and appetites of inclinations and tastes, assuming almost instinctively that the maximum of gratification will mean the maximum of peace? When we are denied gratification we are restless and disturbed; we are ever making plans for indulgence. When we have money we plan to spend it on pleasure or gain of some sort. When we have time we seek to spend it pleasantly. We resent demands made by others on our money or our time. We seek to use others, and resent their attempts to use us. One would think that centuries of experience would have taught men that peace cannot be attained by such measures; that it is not the result of self-gratification.

Possibly there are those who will say, "That is all quite true. What I seek through selfishness is not really peace but forgetfulness. I seek to keep all my senses occupied in order that I may live fully and completely in the present moment. Life to me is a continual now. I do not want to think of the past, of whether my life has been a failure or not; or what has been its effect upon others. I do not want to look back on my youth and recall my dreams and ambitions wherewith I filled my life at its opening. Nor do I want to look on to the future, to plan, to dream of its possibilities. Least of all do I want to look beyond life and consider what awaits me there. I want to live to-day. I want all the excitement, all the sensations, all the things that will dull memory and foresight. That no doubt is not peace, but it is the only substitute for it available for me. You ask me to think, but I do not want to think."

I fancy that is the truth about a vast number of men

and women. That the occupations and the pleasures of their lives are a drug to prevent thought. They turn their backs on the appeals of religion because they do not want to face the facts of religion. They say they do not believe, but what they mean is that they do not want at all to consider what religion asks of them. There is a good deal that passes for unbelief which is not such at all. After all it takes a certain amount of intellectual effort to disbelieve anything. We may just reject because we do not want to consider belief, but such negation is far from being an intellectual act. So, too, we may choose substitutes for the Catholic faith because they offer us what we want without straining our brains, so to say, in so doing. Most of what passes for free thought in opposition to the demands of religion is not thought at all but disinclination. In every mind it is inevitable that this sense of responsibility for life is found. We know that we are not irresponsible units whose conduct matters no whit to any person in the universe. However bold a front we may put on life there is inevitably an inward dissatisfaction which destroys the possibility of peace. And no adoption of theories which deny all responsibility will still our unrest in the presence of the future. It is impossible to prove that you are not immortal and that your future will not be shaped by your present. And it is impossible that there should not be moments when, whatever your adopted theory, the future shall not loom dark and uncertain. You may say death is a great adventure, but you will always be in doubt whether you are ready to take it. While the uncertainty hangs there the fullest peace is impossible.

Nor can peace be obtained through philanthropy. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is the founda-

tion of the Christian's social morals, but it is not the whole of the Christian religion. Divorced from the love of God and placed as the end of life it is only another sort of drug. We are not concerned with the social value and effect of philanthropy. We are concerned with it simply as a substitute for religion. "My religion is to do good," someone says. That may be your religion, but it is not the Christian religion. It is only one element in the Christian religion, an element as important as you like, but still not the whole. And while philanthropy may produce a certain self-complacency, it will not produce an inner peace, which is the outcome of rest in God. How bitterly the Catholic religion has been denounced for its teaching of good works; or rather, how loudly it has been denied that the Christian religion does teach good works. And here we have a theory of life which has nothing to face the future with but good works. It no longer is saying, "Nothing in my hand I bring, only to Thy Cross I cling," but says, "I have not thought anything about the Cross, but I have spent a good deal of my income on good works." Or perhaps more commonly, "I have left a portion of the goods for which I have no further use to found a college." When a church has always taught a theory of good works it is strange to find its opponents missing its meaning both when they deny the value of good works and when they assert them. Catholic Christians are accused of seeking their own salvation first. Their religion is self-centered and selfish. They sacrifice this world to heaven, they are told. Instead of stimulating them to make this world better, instead of favoring and permitting social reform, they teach men to endure any sort of abuse or suffering out of bad, but remediable, conditions, by the promise of fu-

ture happiness. If pleasure is the drug of the worldly, heaven is the drug of the pious.

It is not worth while to spend much time on this objection which I have already dealt with. It needs only very cursory acquaintance of the history of the past nineteen hundred years to convince one that the mainspring of such social advance as has been made is Christian principle. Where and when has some different principle been in operation in reform on a large scale? In fact, have not the most radical social reformers always claimed Christ as their ally, and held up what they regarded as His true teaching in contrast to the failures of the Church? That is sufficient evidence as to the meaning of Christianity, and while Christians may have failed in the full execution of its meaning, at least what they have done has filled the world with good works. Probably there is no reproach that the Christian community less merits than that of thinking too much of heaven. Christians, like other men, are in fact quite too much engaged in making this world heaven, or in dreaming that it may be so made, meaning by heaven, a place of serene and undisturbed comfort. I do not think that that will fulfill the gospel ideal. That ideal is not of a world in which everyone shall possess an automobile and a victrola and be able to go to the movies at least twice a week. Nor do I believe that such an ideal of life, if successfully worked out, will end in the calm and undisturbed possession of peace.

No doubt the Christian is interested in his own salvation and in heaven as the sphere of his future life. That is as little selfish as the interest that a man who is preparing to emigrate from the land of his birth shows in the place of his destination. No doubt the Christian

looks on his life here as a pilgrim state, but equally without doubt he understands that this pilgrim state is a time of probation which he must use with intensity and with a sense of responsibility. And he must use it for others as well as for himself. He is a member of the body, with the responsibility of a member for other members. Therefore he will be in proportion as he is an intelligent Christian occupied in good works, be interested in the betterment of the social order. Again, I do not want to dwell here on ordinary good works, works of mercy. I am only concerned with the fact of the unselfishness of the Christian life, and here, in connection with the sacrifice of the Mass, I would point to but one form of that unselfishness. That is the matter of intercession. The worship of the Christian is a constant intercession. The Mass, which is the supreme expression of this worship is a sacrifice, not for himself, offered for himself solely, but the sacrifice of the whole Body of Christ, for all the members of the Body, whether living or dead. I am quite aware that this fact will not impress critics of Christianity as a selfish religion, but perhaps it will serve to relieve the mind of some simple Christians who suffer under that criticism. Such criticism commonly comes from those who do not want Christianity as a religion but would like to exploit its organized forces for ends of their own.

We return once more to this thought; that what we are seeking through our religion is peace, interior peace of soul. That peace is inseparable from that state of soul which we call righteousness. "Righteousness and peace have kissed each other." And they dwell together in undivided union. In other words, purity of life is essential to peace of life. And purity of life, we, who are so

frequent sinners know, requires the constant justification of the soul by the grace of absolution. "O Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," we cry. And we know that the taking away of the sin is the indispensable preliminary of the peace. We expect God to forgive us. We come to Him with confidence. We say that He forgives, that we may enjoy His peace. And that is well, but do we always remember that this internal peace is conditional on an external peace? On our being at peace with our fellows to the extent of our ability? "As much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men."

"If therefore thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Is not this a lesson to be heeded as we kneel pleading for mercy and peace? Be reconciled to thy brother. Undo the wrong you have done. And so often we cannot undo it. So often the wrong has been like a released germ of some malignant disease, which once started cannot be checked till it has run its course. Then we can only pray and offer our works and our sufferings and our denials in reparation for the wrong that we have done. But often, too, the wrong is one that we can correct. We can remove that wrong impression; we can counteract the injury; we can make good the loss; it may be with shame and loss to ourselves, but still it is possible.

And such reparation on our part is necessary to the validity of our absolution, the essential prerequisite of our peace. It is fatal to think that we can have peace with God when we are at war with our neighbors. The initial proclamation of peace, on the birth-night of the

Saviour, was Peace to men of good will. Like every other grace of God it requires cooperation in its production and can only grow "on good ground."

However, we come back to this, that peace as a Christian virtue, is the supernatural work of God the Holy Spirit acting on souls that readily yield themselves to Him. We seek this peace through the diligent use of supernatural means. A will consecrated and placed at the disposition of God, asking only to know what He wills: which acts in a certain way, not because that way is profitable or pleasant, but because the mind of the Spirit led that way. The soul that uses the means of cleansing and the means of strengthening will have little difficulty in finding the word and the guidance which will set its feet in the way of peace.

THE TWENTY-SIXTH MEDITATION
THE LORD'S PRAYER

The proposed revision of the American Prayer Book makes a greatly needed correction in the position of the *Lord's Prayer*, restoring it to the place which it has in every other liturgy in the Catholic Church, immediately following the Prayer of Consecration. Thus the great eucharistic prayer has added to it the sanctity of our Lord's own prayer, joining it to the communion. The traditional arrangement is as follows. After the "Amen" at the end of the Prayer of Consecration the celebrant says (or sings) "Let us pray. Instructed by saving precepts, and following divine institution, we presume to say; Our Father. . . . And lead us not into temptation." The choir or congregation answer, "But deliver us from evil," and the celebrant says, "Amen." Sung by the celebrant to its proper melody the Lord's Prayer makes a most beautiful culmination to the great act of consecration.

Let us listen to the words of S. Paul:

Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

Let us picture:

SMARY, receiving the child Jesus in her arms for the first time. We like to heighten the impression of the scene by approaching it through memory of the miracles which preceded it; we like to throw about it the glamour of romance which the Christmas story, with its choiring angels and wondering shepherds had created in its tradition through the ages. I think that the simple realism of the scene itself as told in the Gospel will give us a truer impression. After all, we are not dealing with a fairy-tale but with the birth of Jesus of Nazareth who came to save His people from their sins. We shall get the awful character of the event if we sweep aside the mere prettiness of much artistic presentation, and look into the stable, barren and dirty, no doubt. The shepherds when they come to look in at the door are commonplace shepherds, not the creations of pastoral idylls. The thing that is central, the thing that should catch our attention, is the supremacy of love here: the love of God—of God who so loved the world—accepting, nay, seeking, the manger of Bethlehem, and the love of Mary who presses her Child to her heart. Little enough thought has she in that moment of anything else than the warm body of the Child. Mother-love swallows up all else for the moment. Later, it will come to her that this Child is not as other

children, that He is a gift of God wondrously conceived. That is a part of her Child's life by which it is detached from hers and hides some impenetrable experience which will perplex and baffle her for years, but it will not render Him less dear nor her less thoughtful. And when the reality comes home to her as it could only come after the Ascension, we imagine that thankfulness will be the outstanding emotion of her experience—thankfulness that God has chosen her to be the medium of His self-revelation to mankind. The favor of God had been shown her abundantly, and she could only worship and adore. "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift."

Consider, first,

That all others gifts are involved in the gift of the Son. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" The Child in Mary's arms is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." These and all gifts of grace are implicit in the relation that He has assumed to humanity. The life which the Father "hath in himself," is bestowed on those who are caught up in its tides and becomes in them the gift of eternal life. This self-giving of Bethlehem is but the first of a wondrous series of self-givings which culminate in the constant self-giving of the sacramental Presence. The life of the Incarnate is constantly ministered to His members in the "angel's food," the supersubstantial Bread, of the Eucharist. Through the sacrament it is that our Lord has committed Himself to the priesthood of the Body to be constantly administered to needy souls. We are fed day by day with the Bread of heaven; as we come from the celestial banquet must

not the emotion of thankfulness fill us as it filled the holy Mother when she held the Child—her Son and God's Son—in her arms? Thankfulness for the supreme gift of God which is God's surrender to us of his own Presence and therefore of his own strength? I now have Thee who hast all things, we murmur, conscious of the greatness of God's self-bestowal; "how canst Thou withhold anything from him to whom Thou hast given Thyself. Thou who deignest to be laid in a manger, now deignest to be laid in the weakness and unworthiness of my soul, to be wrapped in the swaddling bands of my all-imperfect love." What one can at least do is to adore in silence and offer oneself to the love that enwraps one; one can pray that the worthiness of Him who is at once Giver and Gift may cleanse one's soul from all sinfulness and make it a less unfit place for Him to enter and abide.

Consider, second,

That this simple attitude of thankful acceptance becomes us best—a thankfulness that we seek to express at first simply in the words of our Lord's own prayer. For the moment we have no words of our own and take refuge in His words. Mixed emotions, thoughts of self and others, resolutions for the future, attempts to appreciate the meaning of the Gift—all these will come in time; but just at first let us be simply thankful. The thankfulness we need here is just that grateful appreciation of a great thing done to and for us which requires of us nothing but quiet self-surrender. The most perfect thankfulness is that which is involved in the *acceptance* of God. Let us here, making an act of God's Presence, ask ourselves if we do accept Him as our Father and God. All that I have, all that I am, is of Thee; and freely do I render all

back to Thee to be shaped and ordered by Thy will. We are so often grateful for *gifts* of God, some increment of life, rather than just for God Himself, that it is well at times to try to appreciate God as all and in all. Let us try to put everything else away from us and fill the soul with God. O God, Thou art my God. I do not have to seek for Thee, for Thou art here. I thank Thee just for Thyself! Try just to hold yourself quiet in the Presence of God and let Him speak and act in a soul untroubled and undisturbed by any action of its own. Try not to *disturb and distract yourself*, that God may be free to work in you His perfect work. Let the infinite joy of possession be yours, unbroken by any wish, unruffled by any self-determination. Do we always give our Lord opportunity to work in us before we begin the clamor of desire, before we beg and besiege Him with our eager petitions? His coming is so quiet, so unobtrusive, so unassertive, "like as the dew of Hermon that falls upon the hill of Sion," that we may easily mistake His silence for His absence and cry for that which we already have. Let us be still and know that He who comes is God, and simply say: *Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Gift.*

Let us, then, pray,

That God will give us a deeper appreciation of the meaning of the Eucharistic Gift, and will fill us with thankfulness for it.

I give Thee thanks, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God, who hast refreshed me with the most holy Body and Blood of Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and I pray that this Sacrament of our salvation which I,

unworthy sinner, have received, may not turn to my judgment nor condemnation, according to my deserts, but to the profit of my body and soul, unto eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer has been shifted in position in the Mass at different times; the position that it now occupies in the Office suggests that the intention is that of thanksgiving. The Sacrifice being offered, the Communion being ended, the natural attitude of the participant is that of thanksgiving for that in which he has been permitted to share. The Lord's Prayer therefore may be regarded as a prelude to the General Thanksgiving which follows. We use our Lord's Prayer with this special intention as it was used at the opening of the Mass with the intention of preparation. We are thrown by our contemplation of the Altar into the attitude of the Psalmist: "Sing praises unto the Lord, O ye saints of his; and give thanks unto him for a remembrance of his holiness. . . . Therefore shall every good man sing of thy praise without ceasing: O my God, I will give thanks unto Thee forever."

In general, our thanksgiving is founded in a confidence in the promises of God, in a conviction that this is God's world, and that it is governed in righteousness. Thankfulness is not the momentary outcome of a passing experience; it is not a reaction from benefits received; nor is it, as the cynic has expressed it, "a keen sense of benefits expected." Any enduring foundation for thankfulness must reach far beyond our individual case. Our religion is not to be thankful when we have received some-

thing, but to be thankful because of what God is and does. We have, to be sure, all received overflowing graces in the supreme gift of union with God in our baptism, in the constant gift of our Lord in the Holy Communion, and in many other ways in the course of our lives. But these are personal gifts and the expression of what God is in relation to us; they are because of God's providential ordering of life.

It is well for us to go back to this foundation and face clearly the grounds we have for thanksgiving. There are multitudes of people who will never consent to view the world and life from other than their individual angle of experience; who repudiate all belief in the goodness of God because of something evil they have discovered in the world, or because of some pain they themselves have experienced. Uniformly they decline to consider their Christian vocation as the wonderful gift of God for the attainment of which they might well sell all that they have. They are unable to understand goodness in God as anything else than the obligation to make life easy and pleasant. Such an attitude constantly complains of the existence of pain in the world. It is an wholly unintelligent attitude, an attitude of fruitless criticism. The alternative to a belief in the goodness of God is atheism which leaves our problems even more acute and without any possibility of solution. Atheism is no way out and very few persons take it. What the many do is to try to hold on to some sort of belief in God, and to complain of His method of government. In other words they live in a state of hesitation and revolt which prevents either the peace of despair or the peace of God.

I am not here concerned with the problem of pain but with our grounds for thankfulness; and I am especially

concerned to indicate that our thankfulness rests on deep and firm foundations which are not affected by the difficulties of an individual experience however painful and mysterious. And I think that I am right in saying that the ultimate ground of our thankfulness is found in the fact that we live in an orderly universe. It is true, is it not? that a good deal of the criticism of God and of God's government of the world is ultimately an objection to the fact of its orderliness. What the objectors seem to want is that exceptions should be made in their case, that the order of the world should be superseded for them. But if we can think of the order of the world as being constantly superseded at the demands of individuals, the world ceases to be order and becomes chaos.

I am aware that this statement will be criticised as an objection, if it hold good, to prayer. But I don't think that it is. I can only understand the prayer of petition as a part of the order of the universe and not as a sporadic interference with it. Ultimately, the universe is spiritual and moved by spiritual forces; it is an expression of the will of God. And prayer is spiritual force entering and cooperating with other spiritual forces. If it be an attempt to *induce God to change His mind* it is indeed unintelligible. If it be a submission of one's self and one's desires to the wisdom and love of God, looking rather to the revelation of His will than the accomplishment of our own, then it quite fits in with the providential ordering of the world and becomes an element in it. Prayer is one of the forces whereby God governs the universe, an instrument in His hands for orderly working.

I return, therefore, to this: that the ultimate foundation for thanksgiving is our belief in the *order* of the world; in other words, that in the conduct of life we can

count on certain fixed elements. This is our confidence because order implies intelligence and intelligence implies personality. That the world is orderly implies that it is governed by an intelligent Person. All science is based on a belief in order—in the uniformity of nature; beyond that science does not go. It is philosophy which makes the inference—the necessary inference—to intelligence and personality. “The fact that one seeks a cause of any phenomenon involves as its intellectual basis a belief in the uniformity of nature. And a belief in the uniformity of nature implies that back of nature there is intelligence.” This principle must be extended beyond the material to all life. What we seek to do in prayer is not to inject a disorderly element into the universe, but as free personalities to take our part in the conduct of it. That God should grant a prayer with the result that that happens which otherwise would not have happened is no more disorderly than that the human father should grant a request of his son with the same result. To deny that we have to be materialists and atheists, to deny the existence anywhere in the universe of free personality.

But if I can count on the order of the universe because it is governed by a personal intelligence, then I can rely on the promises of that intelligence, that is, on God. I can seek the will of God and direct the movements of my life with reference to that will in perfect confidence. I am convinced that the universe is moving to the fulfilment of a divine purpose and that I am part of that purpose. I am convinced that the will to fulfil that purpose is supreme and omnipotent; and therefore I am certain that whatever happens will in the end minister to the fulfilment of the will of God. My own life is a part of that purpose and therefore fits in with it. The execution

of the purpose may be delayed or modified by resistant wills but in the end it will hold. And in the end if I do not resist but cooperate I shall find my completion in the fulfilment of the purpose. This must be the truth about me if I obey the purpose as it is made known to me. "Thou shalt show me the path of life; in thy presence is the fulness of joy; and at thy right hand there is pleasure forevermore."

The ultimate basis of thankfulness, then, is the discovery of One Whom we may utterly trust, to Whom we may surrender our lives with the certainty that He wills what is best for us. Our next step carries us on to the revelation of that will and purpose as made in the life and work of Jesus Christ. There that purpose is revealed as a purpose to establish a Kingdom in this world, to build up here out of human beings an organism which shall be the expression of God's will and the instrument of God's work; and with this work we are associated as subjects of the Kingdom and members of the Body. Here we have a purpose not inferred from the material world but revealed from the supernatural world. God has set up a Kingdom in this world which he has confided to His redeemed servants to build up.

Here again we meet opposition. When we pointed to the order of the world as evidence of the existence of an intelligent Ruler we were pointed to certain elements which it was alleged were disorderly from the point of view of our hypothesis and therefore negatived it. Now when we assert the revealed purpose to build the Kingdom we are confronted with the assertion that, as a matter of fact, no Kingdom seems to be building. That 2000 years would seem to be a fair amount of time in which to test our theory and that obviously the Kingdom is not here.

"Since the fathers fell asleep all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation." It is the same objection, you will note, not that the theory is demonstrably false, but that "it does not work." It is an objection calculated to impress the superficial but will not stand thinking out. The same objection applied to the theory of evolution would prove that there was no such thing, because it could be shown that at any stage of evolution there were setbacks and reversions. It is however obvious that evolution went on and goes on; and it is also obvious that the uniformity of nature involves catastrophes which appear to violate it. So the progress of the Kingdom must meet opposition and disaster, and can meet them without ceasing to go on. It may not go on as we would like it to go on, or as theoretically it should go on; the point is that it does go on.

Still the objections are of so great force to many minds that they are productive of pessimism. The pessimist is the man who despairs and gives up. No man is a pessimist who recognises the facts and fights nevertheless. We are suffering to-day from a wave of pessimism which is due, partly to scientific materialism and partly to the collapse of our confidence in progress. We have been very rightly compelled to face the facts of life and they have not been what we had been taught that they would be. But to face facts is not necessarily productive of pessimism: the result may be to clear our minds of false theories and bring us to an appreciation of the truth. The truth that we are presently compelled to face is that we have been travelling on the wrong track. We have been putting our confidence in democracy and progress, and when we leaned on this reed, it broke and pierced our hand. It is not that progress is an illusion

and that all things move in endless cycles but that we have had an erroneous notion of what progress is and what its means are. We have thought that we could take matters into our own hands and create a world in which there would be pure joy and unshadowed pleasure in life. Now our world has fallen down about our ears. It has been pointed out that there are "two doctrines of human progress; the first, nourished by the school of self-indulgence, seeks to rehabilitate the passions, and, promising the nations an earthly Paradise at the end of the flowery path, gives them only a premature hell at the end of a way of blood. The second, born of and inspired by Christianity, points to progress in the victory of the spirit over the flesh, promises nothing but as the prize of warfare and pronounces the creed which carries the war into the individual soul to be the only way of peace."

This is the doctrine of the Kingdom of God which is set upon earth to purify and refine it, and ultimately to result in the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. This is a stupendous undertaking, no less than the spiritualisation of the human race, a work which is necessarily slow because it has to begin afresh with each new generation. That which is accomplished in any generation can only partially be handed on, and is apt to be defeated and destroyed by those who come after. That such a work is going on is a matter of profound thankfulness though to our impatience it seems slow. But imagine that at the creation of the world it had been revealed to some angelic intelligence that the purpose of creation was to produce intelligent self-determining beings, "a little lower than the angels," and then imagine the angelic intelligence watching the slow unfolding of creation through the succession of mil-

lennia. Would he not have marvelled at the length of the process by which intelligent personality was arrived at? Surely he would. But if the divine process of making intelligent beings was so slow, shall we expect that the process of spiritualising the race shall be more rapid? The work of God is not only to make a spiritual individual but a spiritual society, which is a vaster task. We have not yet had a spiritual community, and it is immensely difficult to live a spiritual life in an unspiritual community. That explains the sporadic character of the saintly life; it emphasizes the pressing obligation of working for a spiritual society—a city of God. “When men seek both to get light and to perform duty, they realise that the good life can only be lived in the good society, and failing that, a man can but do the best open to him in the system in which he finds himself, and strive always to bring about a better system.”

One finds sometimes that Christians are a depressing set because they seem to feel that they ought to be living in a perfect world that someone else has made for them, rather than that they are living in an imperfect world which they ought to be improving for their successors. Let it be that the world and the Church are in a bad state to-day, what are we going to do about it? Complain continually, or thank God that He has given the ability and opportunity to make it better?

“Lift up your hearts”—or, as the world says, “Cheer up.” This is God’s world and no one can snatch it out of His hand. This is God’s Church, and no one can prevent it from reaching the fulfilment of the divine purpose. In the fulfilment of that purpose it presents a shifting life which we have difficulty in appreciating at

any moment because we can see but the momentary aspect. An artist reports that in an attempt to make a detailed study of a lemon tree he found an element of difficulty introduced by the fact that the tree was alive. Every morning when he sat down to his work he was confronted by what was in some respects a new tree. During the night some shoots had pushed to the front, some new leaves unfolded, buds had burst into blossoms and blossoms had faded and fallen. It is something of the same difficulty which confronts us when we essay to estimate the life of the Church. The Church is a living thing and changes in the outer aspects of its life from century to century. The life that is in it finds new modes of expression; the activities of one period decline and new ones take their place. A description of the life of the Church at one period is not wholly true at any other. And yet the lemon tree remains essentially one and unchanging, with the same trunk and branches and general outline. And the Church is unchanging in the essential elements of its life. The lemon tree continues to produce flowers of a certain type and fruit of a certain shape and color; and the Church continues to teach one faith and administer the same sacraments and produce the same fruitage of sanctity. The difficulty of *seeing* is a very real one. Imagine a Christian of the year 250. He would have lived in a church which he might well say had been exposed to constant persecution from its external enemies and torn by constant heresies from within. I suppose that many men did despair of the ideal and give up. But as we look back at the period what we actually see going on is the rapid (so it seems to us) spread of the Gospel through the Roman Empire.

The Canon of Scripture was being settled, the Creed developed, the Liturgy was taking shape, the Penitential System was being worked out, the hierarchy was expanding, the foundations of the Canon law were being laid, Monasticism was growing up, the theory of the Spiritual life was being worked out. For all these things to-day we go back to the early Church—and yet many in it were in despair and thought it an absolute failure.

If we attempt to appreciate our own time can we find any basis for optimism? We of course find the same ultimate basis of optimism that we have always had—I believe in God, I believe in the Holy Catholic Church. The fact that our present circumstances present a good deal of difficulty does not shake that belief. In a disorganised world we may expect a disorganised Church; but we may hope that humanity which has wandered into “a far country” in its prodigal use of the material world will ultimately “come to itself” and return to the Father. There are evident signs of weariness in the world to-day, and weariness may be the door through which God will come in.

You pass Me sometimes in the meanest street,
For even there the erring sheep are fed;
Amid the sin-soaked traffic where you go,
I carry bread;
Why have you never heard My haunting feet
In your small world below?
Sometimes I am so near you passing by,
I pause with yearning pity,—touch your hand,
And bless you in the dark with “It is I!”
One day your heart will break and understand,
And you will know.

The Church Militant has always been a difficult place for many folk to live in. The demands that life makes there are constant and exhausting. Life there calls for the constant exercise of the energetic virtues. Those who conceive Christians as fainéants and shirkers while they may, unfortunately, read accurately enough the characters of some Christians, are wholly mistaken as to the nature of the Christian vocation. "The wisdom which is from above is first pure and then peaceable," and there can be no peace until purity is achieved. This is as true socially as it is individually, and the Christian has no more right to acquiesce in social sin than in individual sin. As long as the conditions of the world are what they are we are at war with the world; and when the world's warfare against us is crowned with a measure of success and the world triumphantly invades the Church, then the state of war is acute. It is then that nervous and timid people, and people who think themselves peaceable when they are really cowardly, are tempted to give up the fight and retire from the field. They chatter about peace and quiet and a Church untorn by controversies; they want to be at rest. Well, the proper place for such rest is the grave—though one doubts if they will find it restful. Times of difficulty call out the strength of the faithful and appeal to all that is heroic in our nature. If one were going to desert one would prefer to desert in a time of peace than when the Church is facing the enemy. When cowards are throwing down their arms and traitors are opening the gates to the foe is the time for the faithful children of the Church to gird their loins for the battle. It is as true of the Christian life as of any other life that its health demands exercise.

If life were slumber on a bed of down,
Toil unimposed, vicissitude unknown,
Sad were our lot.

"Other men have labored and ye are entered into their labors." The fact itself of our inheritance imposes an obligation—an obligation not only to hand on the inheritance but to hand it on unimpaired. We look back at the long line of our splendid ancestors and see in vision the lives and labors which were the price of our inheritance. S. Paul is the type of them all and his catalogue serves for the summing up of the experience of those who in this world have preserved and handed on the Christian faith. "In all things approving ourselves the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

The songs of those who triumph will be sung by those who remain on the field of battle and not by shirkers and ecclesiastical camp-followers.

Are we thankful for the possession of the Catholic religion, for opportunity to teach and practice it? Are we thankful for the Mass, that we can kneel here and offer the divine Victim and receive the heavenly Food?

Do we realise the obligation that is involved in privilege? We receive that we may transmit. Relation to our Blessed Lord is a relation that issues in "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls," surely not that they may selfishly enjoy (if that be possible) but that they may act. . . . How often the word *strength* is the expression of the Christian experience. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me," says the great Apostle. "Strengthened by the might of the Spirit in the inner man" is the result of our union with our Blessed Lord.

And we will recall again that in receiving the Sacrament of the Altar we have received the Holy Spirit, His strength has been placed at our disposal. The presence of the Spirit floods the soul with strength. The Spirit is to the soul what life is to the body. All bodily activities are energised by life; life is the light of the eyes, the skill of the fingers, the intelligence of the intellect. If life goes out, these go out; they are functions of life. So the Spirit of God in us is spiritual understanding, is knowledge and the wisdom that uses knowledge. This it is that imparts vitality to our drooping spiritual energy and gives clearness to our spiritual seeing. You have seen the whole face of nature drooping and fading under the pressure of some long-continued drought. The crops are stunted, the leaves droop, the fields are burned. Then the rain comes and the whole face of the landscape is changed. One is conscious of a great sigh of relief going up from the face of the earth where life at once manifests itself renewed. So is the coming of the Spirit in the soul. Dry and parched, its strength exhausted, fruitless and effortless as the result of sin, of despair, of failure to use grace, it is, when it turns to God and opens its arms to Him, at once received and vivified and restored in spir-

itual health and activity. We kneel down, as we say, *dispirited*—and no word could be more literally accurate; we rise filled with the power of the Spirit, ready for the service of God.

I am going to insist once more that the right to teach and practice the Catholic Religion has been maintained for us at no small cost. We believe in the Holy Catholic Church. We believe that that Church to which we belong and which ministers to us the sacraments is that Church. We know that that belief is bitterly assailed from without and from within. How has it been maintained? We look back on the bitter struggles of the Reformation period and the lives of the men who maintained intact the faith of the Church through that awful period; we look at the Puritan revolution and the apparent annihilation of the Church of England; we see how its faith and practice was carried on in those dark days until it was enabled to emerge into the light once more. And then we see the darkness settle during the eighteenth century, a darkness shot through with light-rays here and there. Then we see the coming of the Oxford revival of the life of the Church. To-day we are the immediate heirs of that movement. It is easy to criticise much that has happened in the Church during these three centuries past; it is easy to point to flaws and failures in the life and work of the men who were set to guide the fortunes of the Church. And perhaps because it is so easy and requires so little knowledge much of our appreciation of the immediate past takes the form of criticism. But such criticism is radically unfair, for under circumstances of immense difficulty those men preserved the Faith of the Catholic Church and handed it on to us. If we feel that we can criticise it must be because we

have attained a position from which we can see more clearly and act with greater freedom, and that we have attained such a position is due to their labors and sacrifices. I look back to-day and thank God for the labors and sufferings of S. Athanasius and his contemporaries who stemmed the tide of the Arian heresy and made it possible that to-day I should confess that Jesus Christ is God of the substance of the Father. And I no less thank God for the love and labor of those Anglican saints and doctors who made it possible by their labors and sufferings that I can to-day believe and practice the whole Catholic Faith as a priest of the American Church. Their imperfections and failures sink into nothingness compared with their accomplishment.

And not only are we thankful—we who are the heirs of the promises—to those who have gone before for the inheritance they have transmitted to us, but we acknowledge the obligation springing from the possession of that which we have received. We are compelled to ask ourselves: What can we, must we, do?

And for our answer we turn back to that prayer which was our starting-point, the prayer which from its position in the Mass suggested the thought of thanksgiving. The opening words of that prayer give us the beginning of an answer to our question: "Our Father . . . hallowed be thy Name." There is the beginning; God's Name is to be hallowed, that is, accounted to be holy and shown to be holy, not by others but by us. We at least begin to fulfil our obligation of thankfulness when we begin to be missionaries of the holiness of God. The obligation of the inheritance of the Catholic religion is the consistent practice of it in all its fulness and richness. "I am a Catholic" means so much! Means that I am stepping

forward as the exponent and champion of this Church which has been fighting for nearly two millennia for the spiritual rebirth of mankind. I am presenting myself to take my part in that work; I have heard my name called and answer—*Adsum*.

The obligation of possession—we are hearing a good deal about that to-day: the man who *has*, has not only an individual but a social obligation. Someone has spoken of that “important lesson of the worldly respectable—that duty is what other people ought to do.” That is the reverse of the Christian attitude. I cannot stand looking on and asking: “What shall this man do?” I must myself throw myself into the work of the Church of God as the conditions of life and of the Church to-day present that work. It does not matter if I cannot do the ideal things—rarely in this world can we do that which is ideal; but we can do the next best possible thing—and do it cheerfully. We need to be convinced that there is a work of God for us to do and that we, and no other, can do it. That is our vocation to-day—to do that.

And be thou sure of this; no other can
Do for thee that appointed thee of God;
Not any light shall shine upon thy road
For other eyes; and thou mayst not pursue
The tracks of other feet
.....thee the Angel calls,
As he calls others; and thy life to thee
Is precious as the greatest's life can be
To him; so live thy life and go thy way.

THE TWENTY-SEVENTH MEDITATION
THE THANKSGIVING

Our *Prayer of Thanksgiving*, “Almighty and everliving God . . .” is taken, at least in part, from a Lutheran source, Hermann’s *Consultation*. In the English Prayer Book its use is optional.

In the Roman Mass (and in the old Sarum Mass, which is practically identical with it) as soon as the celebrant has given communion and performed the ablutions he goes to the epistle corner and reads the *Communion Antiphon*. This forms part of the “proper”; that is, like the Collect, Epistle etc., it varies with the day. Like the Introit and the Offertory it was originally inserted to be sung by the choir to fill up an interval,—the time consumed while communion was being administered. It used to be of considerable length but in the course of time it was gradually shortened until now it is generally only a single verse, usually, but not always, from Holy Scripture.

Let us listen to the words of S. Paul:

Now are ye the Body of Christ, and severally members thereof.

Let us picture:

HE baptism of the Philippian jailor. The scene is in the courtyard of the city prison where there is a fountain of running water. This man who is now waiting to receive baptism had, in all probability, but a few hours before never so much as heard of Christianity. He would have heard of a riot in the city raised by the teachers of a strange religion, and then two men, their backs cut and bleeding from their recent flagellation, had been dragged into the prison and committed to his custody, with a charge to keep them safely. He had carried out his orders and thrust them into the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks. What were two prisoners more or less to him? Why should he care whether their wounds were undressed, or whether they came thirsty and hungry? He goes about his business without further thought of them. And then come the strange sound of Psalms sung in the inner prison, and the whole place is shaken by an earthquake and the prison doors swing open. The terrified jailor sees in imagination the empty prison, the angry authorities who will not listen to any tales of doors self-opened, but will treat him as summarily as they had treated the prisoners they had sent to him to be kept in safety. It is death

that he faces and he may as well, he thinks, face it in his own way; so he draws his sword. Then the prisoners intervene and he is saved from imminent death. Try to see this jailor, fear and joy struggling in his face, prostrate before the feet of S. Paul. The one thing that is clear to him is that somehow these strange prisoners represent divinity, and that by his treatment of them he has offended divinity. How can he be saved?—so he questions. And before the night is over we have this strange scene in the courtyard of the administration of baptism to him and all his house.

Consider, first,

That the dominant feeling of this man who had been so near death would have been thanksgiving for his escape. Later, no doubt, it would have been thanksgiving for the very danger that he had gone through because it had been the occasion of his coming to a great light. There are times when the events of a man's spiritual experience move rapidly; when what are ordinarily the experiences of weeks or months are crowded into minutes; when in the midst of seeming safety our peril is revealed to us, and in the very shock and stress of the peril the way of escape is opened. At such moments men do not stop to argue about the way, or ask for nicely considered proof that it is the rational way; their souls are open to any hope that is held out to them. When the Apostle says, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, there is a quick leap of the spirit in response. The need is great, there is no time for hesitation, and there is readiness to trust those who have so plainly shown themselves the ministers of a supernatural power. The soul

drinks in the hasty instruction; if deliverance is through this newly heard Name, let it be accepted with all that it implies. Fuller information can come later. The man, any man, under such circumstances, is ready to "take on faith," as we say; to trust, that is, the word that is so obviously connected with power. The brief explanation that Jesus is God and Saviour, and that remission of sins and acceptance by Him is ministered by baptism, is sufficient basis for present action. Let this be ministered now ere the day come and with the day the magistrates, and it may be the release of the strange prisoners to go on their journey and be seen no more. So there is washing in this improvised fount, this strange laver of regeneration, and hearts filled with joy and gratitude which will not pass away, but will expand with unfolding spiritual experience in the communion of the Church of God which is at Philippi.

Consider, second,

How the seed sown in the highways by passing Christian teachers sprang up and grew in the years of the apostolic preaching in many a city. The Church is such and such a place would contain what wonderful spiritual histories if one could only read them! One imagines that when Christians gathered in the house of one of their number there would be marvellous stories of the way in which the faith came to them. "It was," one might say, "when I followed out of mere curiosity the crowd that was going into the synagogue that I heard the story of Jesus and my heart was kindled to believe and follow him." "I" we can imagine another eagerly saying, "I was overwhelmed with sorrow by the loss of

my child and in despair that I should never see him again, when a friend whispered to me not to be without hope; that to him had come the knowledge of a world beyond death, where God reigns in the presence of deathless souls. So I followed to the meeting of the brethren and listened and believed." Story after story there must have been, and each story dwelling on the note of power and rescue and thanksgiving. The experience they all shared, is the experience of being saved —of being rescued from a life of sin and darkness. This would be one of the bonds which would hold them closest to one another. They would be one body outwardly by virtue of the common experience of salvation; and they would come, under the guidance of the Apostolic teaching, to recognise their oneness with Christ their Saviour and through Him with one another by virtue of the spiritual transaction they had undergone. Their baptism was not only the mark of their discipleship, but the instrument of their spiritual regeneration which was the origin of the new life by which they felt themselves possessed. So their gatherings would be the gatherings of brothers who knew that by one baptism they had been baptised into One Body and made members of Christ and of one another.

Let us, then, pray,

For greater thanksgiving for our privileges as Christians; pray, to understand the greatness of the gift of your baptism.

O God, who restorest human nature to a higher than its original dignity, look on the ineffable mystery of Thy loving-kindness; and in those whom Thou hast been pleased to renew by the mysteries of regeneration, pre-

serve the gifts of Thy perpetual grace and blessing; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE THANKSGIVING

We have been considering the virtue of thankfulness in a general way as it concerns us as members of the Church Militant. We have tried to see in the action of God in the history of the Church the grounds for constant thankfulness on our part. I believe that pessimism and discouragement as to the progress and state of the Church are due to the focusing of attention on certain aspects of church life to the neglect of others, and to our inability to see the meaning of the present which must always make contemporary judgments of doubtful value. It is impossible for us to see the life of our own time clearly enough to disentangle the permanent from the passing, the accidental from the essential. Our duty is to do what work lies before us from day to day in perfect confidence of God's government of the world and the Church. It is no doubt a very human tendency to overrate our importance as factors in the conduct of the life of the Church and to extend the scope of our responsibility beyond its proper limits. It is as well to remember when we are tempted to complain that our responsibility is for our own action and not for the actions of other men, still less for the action of God. Let us be thankful, among other things, that we are not responsible for the conduct of the Kingdom of God.

And let us remember the obligation of thankfulness with reference to our own opportunities of service. It is on the whole easier to consider the lives of others

rather than our own—and much less profitable. Here at the outset as we take up the General Thanksgiving as a matter of immediate personal concern we find ourselves kneeling in the church as the Mass draws to an end. The Church, the Body of Christ, of which we are members, is thanking God for His blessings, and especially for those blessings which come to us through the Mass. We have been fed "with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood" of our Saviour Christ. That is the outstanding fact of our state as we kneel here. That fact opens out to us an endless vista of privilege in the revelation it contains of what a Christian really is. I, who kneel here, am a member incorporate in the Mystical Body of Christ and an heir through hope of His everlasting Kingdom.

It is not easy to bring home to us what these words really mean, but until we can see ourselves to be literally what they say that we are we cannot understand what it means to be a Christian. Nor can we be properly thankful. Thankfulness is our reaction to God's action upon us; but our reaction will be proportionate to what we understand God's action to be. If we only conceive of God's attitude toward us as a vague benevolence our reaction will be correspondingly vague and lifeless. I take it that the lack of vitality in our thanksgiving is due to a lack of appreciation of what we have received. We have not cleared our minds sufficiently as to the meaning of *grace*, we have not sufficiently used *grace* that has been given to find in our relation to God the very source of life—of the energy that transforms life.

This, if I understand the matter, is the great secret of a growing sanctity: the saint is *sensitive* to grace and quickly responsive to the influence of God. We are

deeply influenced and moulded, we are constantly told, by our environment. The community we live in, the friends with whom we intimately associate, insensibly mould us. But it is also true that in a very large measure we control our own environment. Take, for example, two boys born in the same village, members of the same set. One is wholly given over to material and sensual gratification, and grows up to be a self-centered egoist concerned only with the immediate gratification of desires. The other shows a tendency to seek higher things. He loves to read; he dreams of a kind of life that should be fuller and wider than that which he sees about him. He seeks for education as the instrument of what he conceives as fulness of life. To get this he denies himself and lives a hard life and separates himself from companionship. He too gains what he seeks. Each boy has been influenced by his environment, but each has selected from the environment what he wanted. The secret of sanctity is that the man or the woman selects and appropriates those factors in the environment which make for the knowledge and the love of God. Those factors are always there; the secret is that we should *want* them, be convinced of their desirability in life. Why one wants them and another does not is a mystery beyond the possibility of our understanding. Why one baptised child grows up to love all things pure and holy and another to despise and reject them, is the ultimate crushing mystery of life. We can only leave it there in the love of God. But we do know that the choice of the things which are pure and lovely opens to us the Vision of God and inspires us in our own future choice. We do know that those who respond to the grace offered go on from grace to grace and from glory to glory.

And we do know that this sensitiveness which is the key to a holy life is cultivable. We grow to understand and love the things that we attend to. We grow in appreciation of our Lord's Presence in the Holy Sacrament by devotion to it and by frequent reception of it. The constant *attention* to the sacramental Presence induces appreciation of it and stimulates use. Here then is one point for our thanksgiving. As the Mass concludes we are left in possession of the gift it brought: we kneel here as those who possess Jesus. As S. John wrote of the Coming of our Lord in the Incarnation, so in our degree it may be said of us: "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us." How are we to embrace this Gift? How are we to hold fast so great a treasure? How are we to prevent the loss of grace when the sacramental Presence passes away? Is it not chiefly by appreciation that we shall hold fast that which we have received? Is it not because we are so filled with gratitude for the goodness, the unspeakable love of God? Once more we murmur, "He loved us and gave Himself for us." Once more we cry: "Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Gift."

And it is desirable that we pass from this acute appreciation of the gift of God into an attitude of mind which is habitually conscious of it, conscious, that is, of the indwelling Presence of God as the permanent background of life. Just as S. Paul could exhort his disciples to pray without ceasing because there is an attitude of soul which is a constant dependence upon God and therefore a constant prayer to Him for support and guidance; so is there an attitude of soul which we may perhaps call the eucharistic attitude, the attitude of one who possesses a great treasure. I suppose a rich

man is not always conscious of his fortune. In the greater part of his waking hours he never thinks of it. But if there be some demand made upon him, if there be some opportunity offered him, he is at once conscious that he can meet the demand, can seize the opportunity. He can contribute to the support of the hospital; he can found the professorship in his college; he can buy the masterpiece; he can build the house. That is, the means are always there when he wants them. So the Christian, living an eucharistic life, is always in possession of resources, of spiritual treasures, when he needs them. He is not always thinking of them but if he has to meet a sudden temptation, to do a good work, to exercise a virtue, the means are there. There is a limitless treasure to draw on, an inexhaustible strength at his disposal.

Is not this a thing to ponder, to be thankful for, as we feel the final blessing rest upon us? Do we not go out from the Mass overflowing with gladness for the Gift of God? There is a renewed store of energy wherewith to meet the demands of the day. We know these demands; we know that we are not going to live a life of undisturbed peace, of cloistered quiet. We are going into the rush and hurry of what men call *real life*. We are going to meet temptation; our patience is going to be tried and our temper ruffled. We have to meet the rough contact of our fellows. We know that we are going to be exposed to certain habitual temptations. But this too we know: that we are carrying into the battle with temptation a hidden strength—we are going armed into the combat. Wherever I go I am carrying Christ: I am in union with Him.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,

Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all who love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

Out of this fundamental relation grows the life of our spirit. We mean by a spiritual life a life which is the expression of an indwelling Presence which, mediated constantly by the Eucharist, is ultimately the Presence of the Blessed Trinity. "The Christian life is life eternal already begun. It is the divine life here below. *Apprehende vitam æternam*, says S. Paul: lay hold on eternal life." Give thanks to God that you have this gift.

For the time inevitably comes when you need it—need the eucharistic gift, need the strength, all of it. For the life that sweeps by there outside the Church, the life of streets and offices, of shops and schools, is a life which for the most part ignores the spiritual; which is dedicated to the god of this world. S. Paul, looking out at it sums it up in one wonderful condensed expression: *This darkness!* It is into that that you shall be plunged in a moment; it is with the powers of that that you will be called upon to contend. For while in here we receive the Gift of God which buildeth up into eternal life; out there our ultimate enemy is not flesh and blood even: But we wrestle "against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." The Christian life is not a trip in the moonlight across a lake in a park but a voyage across a wide and stormy ocean. You will need, successfully to make it, all the guidance of past spiritual experience, all the pro-

vision by the way, which the grace of God can give. It is no human wisdom and conventional moral rules that will help you: it is the life of Christ within you, Christ, your present strength. Thank God that you have that life.

Having that life, there is no reason why we should shrink from the problems which grow out of the world's life. We are made members of Christ and children of God precisely that we may carry the truth of God and manifest the meaning of God to the society in which we live. There is nothing so silly as the constant complaint of Christians at the difficulty they find of living a Christian life in the world. What one suspects is not that they find it difficult to live a Christian life in the world but that at bottom they do not want to live a Christian life. They do not want to manifest the strength and beauty of the spiritual life but they want to live the life of self-indulgence that they see all about them. If a man is really converted all that is less than nothing to him; he does not care to play with the idle toys of social amusement. Life is much too full for that. He has found interests that are absorbing and entrancing. We can understand the boy who hesitates between a Mass and a ball game—understand and sympathise. Perhaps too we can understand the man or woman who hesitates before the demand of the Christian religion for sacrifice and the world's offer of self-indulgence, but in this case sympathy does not come so easy. That word *sacrifice* which the world hates so and which so arouses the resentment of those who want the world and love the world is for the Christian the center of his spiritual experience, an eucharistic word, the very key to his life's meaning. He is a Christian because he is like Christ; and before he

can be like Christ triumphant he must be like Christ crucified. He too must lay his life a sacrifice upon the Altar of the Cross, and he will know no spiritual joy until he has done that. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," is our Lord's Easter message; but He did not overcome the world in order that we might not have to overcome it; He overcame it in order that we might be able to overcome it. We know spiritual joy when we triumph over the world and the flesh in the Name and by the power of the risen Jesus. "Life is never so free nor so triumphant in this world as in the moment when this world has been defied past reconciliation; the moment when the last ship has been burnt and the last fight lost; when the bright day is gone and we are in the dark."

It is in the hope of verifying this which we know to be the true theory of the Christian life that we go out from the Mass to meet the onset of the world. We are justified and at peace with God, S. Paul tells us,—with God to Whom we also have ready access. And what is the result of this? Why, this result, that we "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God," which seems not strange though it be marvellous; but this seems strange, that "we glory in tribulation also, knowing tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope." I am afraid that not many of us have got so far as that —to "glory in tribulation."

It is an astonishing sequence, when you come to consider it—tribulation, patience, experience, hope! And yet the more one thinks of it, the more one feels its inevitableness. If we start from the Cross, from a life surrendered to Jesus to be conformed to His life, we necessarily start with friction, a break with the world,

the cold plunge into the unknown waters of a new life. Is it not inevitable that that should mean tribulation? That it should mean tribulation as deep and searching as the break is wide and deep? We read S. Paul's experience and we understand that it is the necessary reaction from his break with Judaism, with his divorce of life from the past. We follow the annals of the early Church and we find the same thing true in measure in every life fully and freely given to Christ. And after the peace of the Church, after the Church is accepted as a social fact and persecution ceases, does tribulation cease? Not at all; because under whatever changed conditions Christianity means and must always mean a break with the world. The form of the tribulation changes, the substance remains. If the present-day Christian has not experienced tribulation there is something the matter with his religion.

But if he has, if the Cross has become a reality, if he is taking it up daily to follow Christ, then is he finding that there is being developed in him the virtue of patience. The acceptance of the limitations of the Christian life is the discipline of character, a discipline which fits it to become the garden of the Spirit where supernatural fruits are being produced, and among them the fruit of patience. It seems such a merely negative thing, patience, but in fact is a thing of power, an instrument of the mastery of life. Someone has said: "the man who is master of patience is master of everything"; and S. Catherine of Sienna tells us that "the virtue of patience is the sign that shows whether a man is perfect or imperfect." If so great a virtue is the natural outcome of tribulation we may gladly welcome the Cross. For patience enables us to face the unfolding of the divine purpose with calm

and contentment. It is the foe of restlessness; it enables us to look on calmly at what seems the defeat of God. This is the strength of the Psalmist: "Hold thee still in the Lord, and abide patiently upon him; but grieve not thyself at him whose way doth prosper, against the man that doeth after evil counsels." Our fretting against the state of the world and the Church would be stilled by the virtue of patience, and we would do well to turn our energies to the cultivation of that virtue. Carlyle and Bp. Wilberforce were walking together and talking of the death of a friend. Suddenly Carlyle said: "Bishop, have you a creed?" "Yes," Wilberforce replied, "and the older I grow the firmer that creed grows under my feet. There is only one thing that staggers me." "What is that?" asked Carlyle. "The slow progress that the creed seems to make in the world." Carlyle was silent for a moment, and then said seriously: "Ah! if you have a creed you can afford to wait." That is it; we can afford to wait because we believe in God. God is strong and patient, and we can be patient too.

And while we are waiting patience is having her perfect work, and that work is experience, S. Paul tells us. From patience to experience—that is the route of the soul. And what a wonderful way it is that the human soul has to travel on its journey Godward. Situation after situation has to be faced, problem after problem solved, which are essentially the same problems that our predecessors have faced and yet which as faced by us are utterly new. We can, if we choose, be guided and helped by the garnered experience of the past; but how often is that experience declined and the soul goes out to make its own experience unaided. "I want to live my own life," the boy says, "and not someone else's. You made your own

decisions and took your own risks and had your own successes and failures—why should not I do the same?" The sufficient reason for not so doing is that it is impossible. We may reject this or that experience but it is always in favor of some other. The boy may seem to himself to be blazing a new trail through life but in reality he is but following oft-trodden paths. However unconsciously, he is drawing on other people's experience; he is not the solitary adventurer pushing out into the unknown that he imagines himself to be. He is a quite commonplace member of the herd, energised by the herd impulse, guided by the herd mind.

And yet the adventure is an individual one. Our experience, as we accumulate it is in one sense unique. Although all men die, yet to each death is an unique experience; and our life-experience has its own particularity—no one can live for us. Still, as I said, we are but repeating; we decline the guidance of one experience to accept another. Our wisdom, or our lack of it, is shown in the guidance that we accept. We select what we want. The acceptance of the ideals of spirituality by one brother and their rejection by another, goes back into an hereditary determination of character that we cannot fathom. All the leader and guide can do is to make clear the alternatives.

Life is a series of choices, of acceptances and rejections, as the result of which character is being built up. It is a slow process, and we often think that we have made a final choice when we have in fact only begun. If we have chosen God and are striving to walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life we have all the rich experience of the saintly past to guide us. Our experience, no doubt, has its unique features; it is not that of any one saint

in the whole calendar; but however elemental our experience may be it is of the same kind as the experience of the saints; it is a life which seeks its strength in its union with our Blessed Lord, and is continually fed by His sacramental Presence.

Christian experience is the steady attempt to conform life to a model, to reproduce in its essential elements the life of our Lord. Our life is like the life of the saints because it is seeking the same end that they sought and along the same paths that they followed. We are seeking spiritual skill through the practice of the Christian virtues. Raw and awkward we begin; we trip and fall often; but we have a vision and we see a way. We learn, if we are really in earnest, to use our failures as well as our successes as aids in our advance; and oftentimes we learn more from our failures than from our successes. Patience, which is the great virtue of the Pilgrim Way, teaches us to fight discouragement and to decline to accept failure as final. With persistent effort we train our spiritual powers and learn to utilise our spiritual capacity, going on from one hardly acquired position to another. We cannot expect that it will be otherwise for we are the servants of a Crucified Master, soldiers in the Church Militant; and between our starting-point and our end, between the innocence of childhood and the purity of the saint, stretches the Way of the Cross.

It is a weary road—this Way of the Cross? It is an unattractive life that Christianity offers us? It would be if there were nothing to it but the Way. But

The Road is naught; the Hope is all.

We are going somewhere; we are acting for an end; we are sustained by a vision; we endure as seeing Him

that is invisible. If it be understandable and praiseworthy for a boy to suffer the discipline and limitations of a business career because he sees before him the prospect of a fortune, surely a disciplined life is worthy of the glad acceptance of those whose feet lead them to a "city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God." When Alexander the Great set out for the conquest of Persia he distributed all his possessions among his friends. An old servant protested: "If you give all these away, what have you left?" Alexander pointed to the frontier and answered: "Hope." So the Christian strips himself and fares forward. Those who sit by the wayside watching the pilgrims pass; those who look out from the windows of luxurious houses whence comes the sound of music and dancing, and see the form of one toiling through the heat and dust, are amused or critical or pitying as the case may be. To them the Christian is a simpleton or a fanatic. You can read what they think about him in most of the fiction of the English speaking race; you can hear what they think of him in college lecture rooms and across luxurious dinner tables and in the smoking-rooms of clubs. He is a pitiful, a ludicrous figure as he presses onward stooping under the weight of the Cross. Why carry that outworn burden? Why make a spectacle of himself in the full light of modern thought? Why, indeed!

Because he seeks a city. And even if there were no city at the end and his whole course a blunder, he would be more worthy of praise than his critics. For to follow a vision, even a mistaken one, is better than to yield life to the lusts of the flesh. The Christian goes on his way because he is inspired by a marvellous virtue; he is sustained by the virtue of hope. "And hope maketh not

ashamed." It does not mock us but in the end is justified by the result.

If we have chosen aright how many hopes there are in this world which in the end will be "made ashamed"; how many houses of life built on the shifting sands of human speculation which will fall at the first shock of the tempest. There will come the day of testing when those that "sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." What an awakening that is—to look back over our work and find that what it excites in the beholder, nay, now even in ourselves, is shame and contempt. And we do not have to wait for the judgment to know something of that experience. I fancy that there are many who, looking back over the course of their lives, will find that that in which they once delighted is now, in the light of maturer experience, the object of their regret if not of their loathing.

But hope, hope which is based on Christian experience, hope that is born out of tribulation, out of the toil of the Way, maketh not ashamed but is in the end justified in the face of its critics. "The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die: and their departure is taken for misery, and their going from us to be utter destruction: but they are in peace. For though they be punished in the sight of men, yet is their hope full of immortality."

We are content to go on in hope and in a great thankfulness that we see before us a vision of God wherein we trust. Our hope is firmly based on the promises of Christ. Ultimately therefore it is hope in His fidelity, belief that He is the true revelation of God.

We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, and we are content to suffer with Him if so be that we shall be glorified together. What we now pray for, we who are inspired by this hope, is that we may have the further grace of perseverance, the power to hold on. There are so many who begin well and faint by the way, who grow weary and forfeit all that they have won. We would not be as they. And here before the altar, still filled with the divine presence and in thankfulness for the rich grace we have received, we pray devoutly that we may have grace to go on to the very end; that we may by this Sacrament be made partakers of the divine strength, of the strength of God Himself, of the strength of Him Who Makes Strong, of the Holy Spirit Who dwells in us. Perseverance, power to hold on to the end, to fight on when the battle seems all against us, to stand by the Cross with Blessed Mary and S. John the Beloved when all, even the disciples, forsake and flee. “Perseverance is the virtue which receives the crown; it is the flower and glory of the life of man; it is the complement of all the other virtues, which are faithful to it. It never leaves the ship of the Religious Life and it sails there until it arrives at the port of salvation. It is not alone but accompanied; all the other virtues form its cortège, above all two—strength and patience. It is enduring and constant. Why do we say enduring and constant? Because it persists from the moment that the soul begins to be attached to God to the very end.”

When we think out the meaning of our Christian vocation to make clear to ourselves the true ground of our thankfulness, basing it, not upon some passing grace or answer to prayer, but upon the deep fact of our calling in Christ Jesus, we are led on to the thought that a sincere

thankfulness will of necessity manifest itself in some response to the Giver of all good gifts. Thankfulness, of all virtues, cannot remain unfruitful. In the life of human relationships when we are really grateful to a friend we are not satisfied unless we manifest that gratitude in some way. In the Christian life the giving of thanks is an essential thing and it makes itself manifest in acts.

Our gratitude to God shows itself in our relations to one another. Good works are an outflow of our thankfulness. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." To see Christ in the brother and to minister to Him there—that is an exercise of gratitude. To pass on the benefits we have received should be our impulse. Said the Roadmender, "I am most gladly in debt to all the world." Consider the greatness of receiving. When someone does me a favor, makes me a present, I instantly feel indebtedness. It is an uncomfortable feeling. How am I to repay this? I am tempted to make a present in return, but I should not. I should rather feel that the real repayment is to have the same attitude toward others—to pass it on.

"Thanks be to God for His unspeakable Gift." Remain a moment longer absorbed in the Presence. Rest in the wondrous love. What love! That God should come! I am so used to the thought of God coming to the world—the thought of Bethlehem, of the ministering life; but now, once more, God has come, and to me! In my soul is the divine Presence. I am a living temple of God Himself. What love!

THE TWENTY-EIGHTH MEDITATION
THE GLORIA

The *Gloria in Excelsis* is a very early Greek hymn. It belongs to the class of compositions known as "private psalms," as distinguished from the official psalms in the Holy Scriptures. The early Christians composed their hymns on the model of the only hymn book they knew, which was the Psalter. The Eastern Church used the *Gloria* as a part of the morning prayers and has never inserted it into the Mass. It was borrowed and translated by the Western Church, probably about the fourth century, and was inserted into the Mass for Christmas day only. Opening as it does with the song of the angels (from Luke ii, 14) its propriety on Christmas is obvious. Later its use was extended to Sundays and the feasts of martyrs. For many centuries it was allowed only at a bishop's Mass, and its regular recitation, such as we know, only became fixed in the middle ages. Being a hymn of rejoicing, the *Gloria* is inappropriate on mournful occasions. This is the rule for its use: it is said on all feasts (except that of the Holy Innocents) and on all Sundays (except during Advent and from Septuagesima till Easter) and throughout Eastertide except at Masses when black or purple is used. The historical place for the *Gloria*, which was retained in the first Prayer Book, is immediately after the *Kyrie* and not at the end of the Mass as we have it. There are two mistakes, probably due to printers' errors or other carelessness, in the *Gloria* as printed in the Prayer Book: "Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us" should appear but once. And the holy name has been omitted from the last sentence, which should read, "Thou only, O Jesus Christ. . ." There is a similar error in the printing of the Nicene Creed, which should have the word *Holy* before "Catholic and Apostolic Church." Such errors having crept in it is amazing to see how they persist. One can even find those who attempt elaborate and occult theories to justify the retention of printers' errors such as these.

Let us listen to the Song of the Angels:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.

Let us picture:

GE night of the Nativity, calm and peaceful, the heaven filled with stars looking down on the shepherds. Silent night. Holy night. How we love the thought of it. How it has filled the minds of childhood. But to the shepherds there was nothing unusual. It was a night like any other night. God may be so near and we not know! And then a strange light comes; the heavens grow bright; angels' forms appear, and an angel's voice tells the story of the mighty birth. Then the light grows in intensity, in splendor, and the midnight thrills with voices, and the *Gloria in Excelsis* breaks for the first time on human ears—Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will. The more we learn of God and of God's ways with men, the more natural it seems that that Song should have been heard for the first time out here on the open hillside, by shepherds watching their flocks, and not in the lust-defiled palaces of Jerusalem or in the Temple where a self-seeking priesthood has forgotten the service of God. . . . Here, under the stars, were men who could still see angels and hear their voices as they sung. They too were ready to believe and take their way down to the village to find the Child of the Angelic announcement.

Try to see them, when the angels have gone away from them into heaven, going hastily to see this great thing that had been made known to them. It was a small village and they easily found the object of their quest. It would have seemed but a meager fulfilment of so great a promise to the great and learned; but to simple shepherds God is always wonderful and His ways may be expected to partake of the wonder that He Himself is. So they return praising and glorifying God.

Consider, first,

That the glory of God is made manifest to those who have capacity to see. The glory is always present. The angels always sing. At times God wills that men shall see and hear and then He has to seek those who *can* see and hear; and they, seeing and hearing, go their way, praising and glorifying God and making His works known to others. But because God's glory does not *shine* always, and for the most part can only be perceived by those who have spiritual vision, He passes through the world unrecognised. The Child whom the shepherds visited is "the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation," but only momentarily is His glory seen even by those who are most near to Him. But must we not believe that to the eyes of angels He was always surrounded by the light of His glory? One, an apostle, can write: "We beheld his glory"; but only once. But there is a glory which radiates from Him that we all can see—the glory of His perfect purity and of His perfect love. This is the medium through which God wills that men shall see Him; this is the revelation of what for us men God is. But to see this there is need of a certain capacity: He can be seen only by "men of good will."

To them the glory of God is very visible in all the works of God, and above all in the great work of His Incarnation. To them the Manger in Bethlehem is glorious with divine light, and every act of His ministry shines with the splendor of heaven. God seems all the greater to them because of the greatness of His self-giving for our salvation. To them God is light, because He is love. As the light that breaks through storm-clouds and sets the Bow of God in the heavens is more heart-stirring than the unimpeded light of midday, so the light of God which breaks through His stooping to save us, touches our heart more than the thought of His uncreated glory.

Consider, second,

It belongs to us not only to see but also to show forth the glory of God. God is glorified in His works; and His great work now is the upbuilding of the Body of the Incarnate. The work that the angels announced and sang over in Bethlehem is still going on in the world and its progress adds continually to the external glory of God. All the activities and ministries of the Body in its endeavor to make God known and to bring souls to him is radiant with heavenly light, the reflected light of the divine purpose that they seek to realise. We need more to think of our work and of ourselves from this point of view, as they are ministering to the divine purpose. Our little human purposes are so apt to hide from us the mighty purpose of Redemption in which they are merged. We minister to men, not that they may be made more comfortable, but that they may see and know and love God. Our ministry is a true worship in which we offer ourselves to God to be the transmitters of His glory. All that we do to make God better known to any soul

is an increase of the glory of God in the world. One fears that our responsibility Godward in this respect is not as well realised as it might be. When the Apostles of our Lord entitled themselves the slaves of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, surely one thing they had in mind was precisely this obligation to use life for God, to make life a ministry to the better understanding of God by man. Men so easily mistake the meaning of God, that they need to see that meaning expressed over and over again in the lives of those who do understand—to teach them that God is trying to express through them what He Himself is, both light and love. The glory of God which is in the Face of Jesus Christ is also in its degree in the face of every one who is Christ's.

Let us, then, pray,

That we may set the glory of God before us as the end of our efforts. Let "Do all to the glory of God" be our motto.

O Lord, who hast brought us through the darkness of the night to the light of the morning, and who by Thy Holy Spirit dost illumine the darkness of ignorance and sin; we beseech Thee of Thy loving-kindness to pour Thy holy light into our souls, that we may ever be devoted to Thee by whose wisdom we were created and by whose providence we are governed; to the honor and glory of Thy great Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE GLORIA

The normal place of the Gloria is at the beginning of the Mass rather than at the end. At the beginning it is

the overture to the drama of the Christ-life which the Mass essentially is. It is the announcement of the Coming which is to be unfolded in the earthly experiences of that life and consummated in the Sacrifice with which we are concerned. The shift in position to the end of the Mass was logically and historically unfortunate as it breaks the order of its construction. Yet being where it is it has a certain splendor as the final burst of thankfulness at the completion of the act of worship. Glory to God in the highest, indeed, for the gift of His Son which He has once more renewed to us, and which we have once more received. Peace to men of good will—peace to those who are in union with God through the merits of His Son.

As the Gloria goes back to its place in the Gospel it is the note of exultation in a work at once completed and carried a stage farther. The purpose of God which is implicit in the fact of creation—the purpose of self-communication to human nature—has been accomplished. One loves to dwell on the dream of an unsullied universe, of a world untainted and untroubled by sin—which would have been the manifestation of the divine thought in the creation, the externalisation of that thought in the life of the creatures and the extension of the field of the divine love through them—the heavens declaring the glory of God and the firmament showing His handiwork, and man, the cause and end of all, to whom all led up, remaining in that union with God wherein he was created; and all stabilised and held in God Himself by the entrance of the Son into the nature of man so that all that existed should be but the manifestation of the divine love.

But the shadow fell upon it—the shadow of sin; it rested there through the centuries, and instead of the

divine harmony of God's Self-revelation of which we dream we get the revelation of the divine struggle for the rescue of man. There rises before us the mystery of iniquity which we cannot at all fit in with our dreams of the divine lordship over creation but which we accept as having at least the divine permission—a permission for which we wait the further explication. The insane pride of man clamors at the doors of heaven and demands to know all the mystery of creation and of the divine purpose as the price of his allegiance to God. But why should we know all the secrets of the universe? Why should we suppose that we could even understand them if we were told? Are we not like children to demand to be told that which in fact they cannot be told, that which if put into words which are plain to their elders would convey to them no meaning? Spiritually we are still of immature understanding.

The eternal purpose of God is not made known in its entirety but is unfolded step by step in its accomplishment. We get a strange glimpse of the dwellers in the heavenly world watching with eager interest the progress of the unfolding of the divine purpose. What a picture that is that S. Peter gives us—a picture of prophets to whom some knowledge of God's purpose has been imparted, who knew in some vague way, of a "grace" which was to come—a grace strangely mingled of "suffering" and of "glory," "searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify." How wonderful they are, with strained eyes looking out into a future in which they are to have no part! For unto them "it was revealed that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister"—the selfishness of it all so overwhelms one! And then that other note of the divine pur-

pose for us which the prophets so glimpsed—"which things the angels desire to look into!"

In the Gospel then this eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord is carried on to its triumph. The angels who now see the new step onward sing over Bethlehem the triumph song of the Nativity—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will. That is the attitude of heaven. What is the attitude of earth? Our attitude is thanksgiving, too, is it not? Or it may be, an attitude even beyond thanksgiving. When we are giving thanks there still remains something of self, does there not? But when we give glory to God we have gone as far in the way of self-forgetfulness as it is possible to go. Self has become the giver rather than the receiver, and we lose ourselves in the thought of the glory and majesty of God. That majesty and splendor we know now as something manifested, as that which is shown through all the acts of God, especially through the act of the Incarnation: so our response is shown by our active attitude toward God. The glory that we give to God, our gift to Him, is ourself surrendered so perfectly that God can act through us, and men, seeing our good work, shall glorify our Father. There is still an angelic glance this way to see if the glory of God is being by us manifested.

We have not to dwell on the manifestation of God's glory in the natural world. No doubt it was the perception of the order and beauty of the universe which led men to belief in and some dim understanding of a power behind nature. Once having received the thought of God it was easy to see the evidences of this Presence everywhere. What could the beauty of the world mean but goodness; how could it be understood save as an

expression of wisdom? "The beauty of the flowers awakens in the intelligence the thought of God," a heathen writer said, and Mohammed went deeper when, vexed by the materialistic thought about him, he said: "If a man have two loaves of bread let him exchange one for some flowers of the narcissus, for bread only nourishes the body, but to look on the narcissus feeds the soul." Through the Prophets and Psalmists of the Old Testament there is constantly expressed the sense of God revealing Himself to the soul through the world that He has created and of the beauty of that world as a mode of His worship. "The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious."

To us to whom God's action so inevitably means our rescue it will be the beauty of our Lord's life and of His Sacrifice which will appeal most effectively. Christian art and song have done all that they can to call out and to intensify our perception of the supreme beauty of our Lord's earthly life and of our understanding of the meaning of it. In so doing they have involved us in certain dangers, dangers which seem to be increasing to-day. I suppose that it is inevitable that a declining belief in the divinity of our Lord, a loss of a keen sense of His Godhead and all that that implies, shall lead to a sentimental attitude of mind in regard to Him. If Bethlehem be not the birth of God-made-flesh, but the birth of a human child like any other save for the future destiny; if blessed Mary be but one wife among all the wives of Israel, the attitude that is generated toward Jesus and Mary will be one of æsthetic appreciation and philanthropic impulse. This is not theory but fact. The

tendency of religious art since the Renaissance has been toward the sentimental commonplace, till to-day we seem to have touched bottom in banality. I have a picture of the annunciation in which S. Gabriel "who stands in the presence of God" is reduced to a cupid holding up a lily to S. Mary. The *divine* has largely vanished from modern religious art. Our Lord Himself gets more and more translated into a weak-minded creature whose chief characteristic is that He talks about lilies and sparrows. All the strength has gone out of Him. The Christ of the Gospels, the Christ Who denounces sin and proclaims the coming of Judgment, has vanished; and what is left is neither interesting nor important.

Our interest is in the God-Man Who came to the rescue of a ship-wrecked race, who came to die for the sins of the world. "O Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us." And it is precisely in this Lamb of God, in this dying Man of Calvary, that we perceive the supreme beauty, the completest beauty that has yet risen upon the world. There are, it may be, people who can see beauty of the still reaches of the sea as the water stretches out dyed in all the splendor of the sunset; but who shudder before the spectacle of the same sea as the winds of God dash its waves to foam upon the rocks. And there are those who see beauty in Bethlehem and not in Calvary; and they only see beauty in Bethlehem because they misinterpret it and do not see that ultimately Bethlehem means Calvary; that the reason that this Child is beautiful beyond all other children is because Calvary lay before Him; because He has come to die for us, because He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. It is the understanding of this that gives such indisputable supremacy to early Italian

and Flemish religious art over the attempts of the modern world of art to tell us the story of the Gospels. After all, one can only effectively tell a story that one understands.

It is the *beauty* of the Sacrifice of Jesus that the Church has seen from the beginning; in the Cross it has seen the unveiling of the glory of God. Therefore it sings

O Tree of Beauty, Tree of Light!
O Tree with royal purple dight
Elect on whose triumphal breast
Those Holy Limbs should find their rest.

Why is the Cross beautiful? Why is this supreme Sacrifice of a man dying in torture an expression of the glory of God? Surely because of its inherent meaning that God is love. Surely there is a far deeper meaning in our confession of the love of God when we kneel before the Crucifix than when we stand looking at a lily! What the lily reveals is wonderful and fills us with joy and gladness; but the love that the Cross reveals fills us with awe and drives us to our knees. This Sufferer with nail-pierced hands, this dying victim of men's sins, is not only the tragedy of human iniquity, He is the expression of the divine Compassion. We look on the Crucifix and we learn to value suffering, suffering which in us is the reflex of the Cross; we find that pain is not meaningless but somewhat that we can offer to God. It is as though the pathway of life were strewn with little crosses which we are privileged to pick up and offer to our Lord. We find even in the death of those we love a glimpse of God's glory, a manifestation of the divine love. We get the point of view of the Cross in S. Paul's words to the Colossians: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings

for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." It is this conscious union with the sufferings of Christ that not only makes our sufferings endurable but gives them their own beauty albeit a reflected one. We find this beauty, do we not? in the father and mother standing by the body of their daughter, a young religious. Said the father, "Shall we say the Te Deum?" The mother answers: "O, yes, gladly." The same beauty is visible in the correspondence of a mother on the death of her son. Writing for the Son's bedside she says: "He was to have been a priest; he is a victim. Who can complain of being treated as the Son of God?" When another son was killed in battle she wrote: "He was given me to lead to heaven. Now he is there. It is so simple." Yes, so simple, if we have understood that Cross whereon Jesus hung to glorify God by His Sacrifice. Our Lord approached His Sacrifice as a means of glorifying God. "Father, glorify Thy Name," He prayed. And when He asks of His disciples in their own order a like sacrifice He indicates that it has a like value: "And this spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God."

Is not this the secret of the Cross, the secret we miss when we take the modern attitude toward suffering as a thing that must be contrary to the will of God, that it is the utmost expression of the divine love here on earth? That to *give* oneself in some way is to demonstrate that one has learned the secret? We are apt to construe our service of God in terms of gratitude. Gratitude is, no doubt, a noble and a Christian quality: but it is not the highest Christian quality. The highest Christian quality, the supreme virtue, is love, love that gives itself without

thought of return, love that wants nothing but the object loved. We sinners have to cry for mercy, have to beseech peace; but is that a permanent attitude or is it all the attitude that is possible for us? Surely repentance is not all of Christianity. While we are beseeching mercy we are but on the threshold; within the sanctuary the demand is for offering. What have we to offer? Much—our souls, our bodies, all that we are and have. Not the highest saint has more than that, and that the poorest sinner has. What is necessary is that we should make it the vehicle of love, a mode of our self-expression toward God. We appeal constantly to the love of God to help us, but that is only a one-sided expression. "Our egotistical heart loves to be loved; a Christian heart loves to love—without return."

Love wants to give itself or it has not yet understood the Cross. It therefore seeks in some way to serve—and to serve God is to serve those who are the children of God. "It is impossible to show the love I have for my Creator, because He has no need of my service." S. Catherine of Sienna says, "I must therefore make the creature the intermediary and aid and render Him the service that I cannot render to God. That is why Christ said to S. Peter, 'Peter, lovest thou Me?' And when Peter answered, 'Yes,' Christ added, 'Feed my sheep.' The love you bear me cannot serve Me, but it can serve your neighbor."

This characteristic of love that is evidenced in the Cross is in fact an expression of the divine glory. We touch the reality of God (if I may put it that way) much less in the revelation of science than in the revelation of Calvary. It is God's sympathetic touch upon our loves that reveals to us the secret of what He actually is. With

all the fulness of the Old Testament revelation, with all its marvellous presentation of the will and purpose of God, we do not feel that through it we understand what God is as we do when we find Him in Christ. There is the final secret of God—that man, crucified and dying; the understanding of Him there is the needful preliminary to the understanding of the God throned in glory. Before that Vision we might simply fear were it not interpreted for us through the Incarnate Life as love. "To most, even good people, God is a belief. To the saints He is an embrace. They have felt the wind of His locks, His heart has beaten against their side. They do not believe in Him for they know Him."

One aspect of the glory of God, one mode of His manifestation, is *revelation*. God's will is that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth. The glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ is a revealed glory. One reads in revelation the record of God's effort to be known. Why could not God make Himself known? Because to know God implies a certain spiritual receptivity on our part. Not everyone can know God. Everyone can know about God—which is another matter. And we have to begin with *knowing about*. That is where natural religion began, and indeed ended; ended, not that God did not reveal Himself to individual souls apart from religious systems that are revealed: no doubt He did and does. But natural religions in themselves did not afford means of access to the Father. Men knew of God: yes, and they tried to know more of Him; but they could not go far so long as they thought that the means of approach were intellectual. Nothing is more striking in all man's history than the failure of philosophy to reach any settled conclusions. The inference is not that God cannot be

known but that He cannot be known in that way. The effort to understand God must always fail, but because it fails we are not therefore to give up the search. If the explorer trying to penetrate unknown country fails by one route he tries another. Knowledge of God is not the same thing as knowing God—that is the blunder of the agnostic—but there are different ways of approach. S. Bernard says: “To wish to understand God is an act of temerity; to believe in God is an act of faith; to know God is eternal life.”

That is what we seek—that knowledge which is eternal life. “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.” We seek that on the basis of knowledge about God there may arise that true knowledge which we can only call experience. This is an immediate thing, not the conclusion of a process of reasoning, but the intercourse of spirit with Spirit. We know what this is in our own personal experience, no doubt; only we are so timid and so humble that we are often afraid to trust it—are rather inclined to doubt and fancy our experience unreal. But it is the most real thing about us. It is a lower degree of that wonderful experience of which we so often read and with such a feeling of its distance from us in the lives of the saints. But it is not solely an experience of advanced sanctity; often, indeed, it is God’s way of presenting Himself to the sinner and drawing him to Himself. The records of conversion are full of narratives of the experiences by which men have been made utterly certain of God, and through that revelation found their lives renewed. From knowing about God (and often from denying and rejecting Him) they suddenly through His action pass into a state of unshakable conviction of His

reality and present will for them. It were easy to fill volumes with instances in illustration of this. I will instance but one.

Prof. Lutoslawski was born and educated in the Roman Catholic Church from which the course of his education gradually detached him. Under intellectual temptation to give up the faith he demanded of Christ a miraculous intervention to demonstrate His existence; failing that, he became an unbeliever. This was in 1880. Years after,—Nov. 12, 1900—on coming out of a bath he was suddenly struck with the analogy “between a clean body and a clean soul,” and at once went to a priest and asked him to hear his confession. He made a general confession, and ended in an avowal that he had not faith in the Creation, the divinity of Christ, eternal damnation or the power of the Church to forgive sin. The priest (an uneducated monk) gave him absolution and urged him to receive the Communion. He objected that he could not as he did not believe in the Real Presence. The priest insisted and asserted that it was his responsibility. Lutoslawski yielded and “at the very moment at which I accepted from the hands of the priest the consecrated Host, suddenly came the change that transformed my life.”¹

So the glory of God shines out through the wonder of God’s grace. We need to remind ourselves however when we are impressed by such evident interventions of God in human life that they are unusual in form only, and that in reality they are no more wonderful than the normal (to speak from our point of view) works of God. We are impressed by the exceptional, by the eclipse rather than by the sunrise, but one is no more wonderful

¹ *Hibbert Journal*, July, 1923, p. 697.

than the other: nor is the sudden conversion of a soul more wonderful than its gradual growth under the action of grace. The soul that develops steadily from its baptism in childhood and never loses the grace of union there received is the great miracle of God.

We ought therefore to accustom ourselves to look for the experience of the power of grace in the normal rather than in the abnormal. Our Lord said, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe"; but the nobleman out of his great need cried, "Sir, come down, ere my child die." And Jesus spoke the word of healing because the need of man always appealed to Him. These needs of men are not something exceptional or intermittent, and therefore neither is the grace of God; rather it is an ever-ready fountain given for sin and for uncleanness; and the glory of God (can we say, the normal glory of God?) shines in the daily lives of men. The life of obedience, the life of grace, is transfigured by glory; it is the light that shines before men whenever we do God's works, and which they, seeing, are led to glorify our Father Who is in Heaven.

Let us then think of the glory of God as something that shines forth from the obedient life. By an obedient life one means a life which constantly looks to God and seeks to do His will. It does not of course consciously do this all the time but that is the guiding purpose of life. This obedience to a guiding purpose is what produces beauty of character; and so great is selflessness that from the human side much the same apparent result is attained when some abstract notion such a goodness or humanity is substituted for God. There are many to-day who urge us to an opposite course, who advocate "an enlightened selfishness." "A too selfless person," I read in a man's

book, "is ever ineffective." I was going to let that pass as a platitude, and then it struck me that it was not a platitude, it was merely nonsense. What is a *too* selfless person? To express the author's meaning the sentence should obviously read: "A person so selfless as to be ineffective, is ineffective"—not a brilliant discovery. To be selfless or to be very selfless is not to be ineffective—it is to be strong; for to be selfless is not to be weakminded but to be filled with the strength of God. The people whom we should consider to have achieved selflessness are the saints. And what sane person would put a S. Paul, a S. Ignatius of Antioch, a S. Augustine or a S. Bernard among the ineffective?

But perhaps you are tired of saints? Well, let us take an instance from another field. Here is Mr. Winston Churchill's brilliant portrait of Sir Arthur Wilson.

"He was, without any exception, the most selfless man I have ever met, or even read of. He wanted nothing, and he feared nothing—absolutely nothing. Whether he was commanding the British fleet or repairing an old motor car, he was equally keen, equally interested, equally content. To step from a great office into absolute retirement, to return from retirement to the pinnacle of naval power, were transitions which produced no change in the beat of that constant heart. Everything was duty. It was not merely that nothing else mattered. There was nothing else. One did one's duty as well as one possibly could, be it great or small, and naturally one deserved no reward."

In our own way and place we may live the life in which men see not us but Christ Jesus our Lord. We may make it plain that our end is not personal gain but the advancement of the Kingdom of God. We do not

have to be bishops or priests to have that our dominant aim; it is one of the weaknesses of all forms of government that the individual citizen abandons all sense of responsibility in favor of officialdom, and that is true in the Church as elsewhere. But the normal vocation of the Christian is not to watch others advance the Kingdom of God but to do so himself. Nothing will ever take the place of a personal devotion: we cannot employ others to show forth the glory of God in our stead. The prophet Joel's discription of Israel suffering from drought may well be understood allegorically of a fainéant and languid Church. "The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the grain is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth. . . . The vine is dried up, and the fig-tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from the sons of men." And it seems to have small effect; "the priests, the Lord's ministers," "gird themselves and lament and howl," but that is all. The Church languisheth for a revival of good works which shall manifest the divine glory.

Our response to our vocation enables God to work through us. That is what He is waiting for. He could work through the humanity of our Lord because our Lord's human will cooperated perfectly with the will of His heavenly Father. He was a perfect response to the divine glory; and this under all circumstances. There was that day on the mountain top when before chosen disciples He was transfigured and "his face did shine as the sun and his raiment was white as the light." It was a day thereafter often recalled, no doubt; far down in the years we hear one of these three disciples saying: "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only be-

gotten of the Father." And another remembers: the voice which came from heaven and which "we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." Those were wonderful hours when the veil of the flesh grew thin and the hidden divinity shone through. But did this day in reality more manifest the glory of God than other days? There was an evening—the night before He was betrayed—when, supper being over, He took a towel and girded Himself and washed the disciples' feet. There is a glory of God too; but it is a glory which will only be perceived by those who through the Incarnate Jesus have learned to think rightly of God, who can understand that glory is not of necessity the attribute of obvious triumph but often the concomitant of defeat. There is a glory in heaven where the Throne is spanned by the emerald rainbow and the Elders and the Living Creatures fall on their faces in worship; but there is a glory too on Calvary where the Victim dies in loneliness, forsaken, in the darkness of the noon-tide night. And for us the pathway to the glory of heaven is through the humility and service of self-surrender to the purposes of God.

Here then is the vocation to glorify God, here in the union and communion of the Catholic Church. For the Church, again, is the Body of Christ, the organ of the glory of God. God is glorified in His Saints, and in cooperation with them is our place. From time to time one meets those who complain of the Church and the opportunities that it offers; who are tempted to separate themselves from its members on the ground of their lack of perfection or of lack of appreciation of the ability of the person concerned. One suspects that that is just a temptation having its roots in pride, or is some sort of manifestation of self-will. It is well to remember, as has

been finely said, "Our safety lies, not in separation, but in loyalty. It is precisely when the Church appears to have least to offer us, that our wisdom lies most surely in remaining within her courts; for we may be certain that the soul that finds nothing but emptiness within the collective experience and life of believers will find nothing but hallucination and delusion within its solitary self."

The selfless life is the glorious life, and the selfless life is but one manifestation of the love of God in us. That love transcends all obstacles and reconciles all antagonisms. In a trench, after the tide of battle surged by, there were left the wounded. One of them tells of a happening there. There were near him as he lay unable to move, a French and a German soldier. The Frenchman, wounded to death, with difficulty drew from his clothes a Crucifix which he kissed and then began his prayer—*Ave Maria, gratia plena.* The dying German roused by the words, joined in the prayer—*Sancta Maria, Mater Dei.* The Frenchman looked with surprise, and then reached to his neighbor the Crucifix, saying: "After having served our countries we go to God." The German added, "Reconciled."

So we are led on to think of that final manifestation of God's glory which is the unveiling of the Presence in the splendor of the world to come. The flashes of revelation we get from that world tell us of its beauty and of its activity, of the rejoicing of the saints and the praises of the angels. There is little detail; and I suppose that we all fill in the blanks according to our own desires and aspirations, and in the measure of our spiritual development. The details are really not now important. What is important is our desire for God. What we know is

that when we shall wake up after His likeness we shall be satisfied.

Heaven is to be
In God at last made free,
There more and more
Strange secrets of communion to explore:
Within the mighty movements of His will
Our tangled loves fulfil:
To pluck the rosemary we cannot reach
With the mind's span,
And so at last
Breathe the thick fragrance of our hoarded past
And learn the slow unfolding of the plan.
Together to unroll
The blazoned story of the pilgrim soul;
All the long ardent pain,
The craving and the bliss at last made plain.

THE TWENTY-NINTH MEDITATION
THE POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

The *Post Communion* collect is said or sung at the epistle corner of the altar with the same ceremonies and in the same way as the Collect for the day at the beginning of the Mass. The number and the order of the *Post Communions*, should be the same as the number and order of the Collects. Our Prayer Book provides *Post Communions* only for the Masses at ordinations and consecrations. Anciently there was a special *Post Communion* for every Mass. The typical *Post Communion* collect combines with the note of thanksgiving some reference to the day or occasion.

Let us listen to the words of the Psalmist:

The Lord is my Shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing.

Let us picture:

GHE woman with an issue of blood touching our Lord's garment. She has stolen through the crowd behind Him that she might touch Him unobserved. But nothing is unobserved by our Lord; though He was going eagerly at the summons of Jairus to heal his daughter, making His way with difficulty through the crowd that thronged Him, yet He perceived that virtue had gone out from Him in response to the pleading touch of the woman. The scene stands out distinctly. The Ruler of the Synagogue, with the extremity of his daughter's need on his heart, standing by in nervous anxiety at the delay—so much might depend on just a few minutes. S. Peter, a little impatient with our Lord for asking who touched Him, as though dozens were not touching Him as He made His way through the crowd. The woman, feeling that healing after all these years of suffering had come to her, feeling the thrill of health which came in response to the "virtue" that came forth from our Lord; fearing, it may be, that the mysterious gift so quickly given might as quickly be taken away in displeasure, overcome at the discovery of her act, coming and falling down at Jesus' feet and making confession of what she had done and why. And then our Lord, ever responsive to the demands of faith, ever ready to meet the pure

desires of human hearts that reach out to Him in their need, with hopefulness of His help, smiling a little, we think, as He sees the trembling woman at his feet, saying, "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." Try to see the woman going home, healed, yet hardly daring to believe in her healing, so wonderful it is. Or, would she, perhaps, have followed with the crowd to Jairus' house, her eyes fixed in gratitude on the Great Healer?

Let us consider, first,

That it was her need and the desire inspired by her need that sent this woman to our Lord. For weary years upon weary years she had suffered and failed to find any relief from her suffering. But she had not failed to *hope*. Unlikely as it seemed that there should be any possibility of healing she still hoped that healing would come. And then our Lord came. How the knowledge of Him came to the woman we do not know; but the fame of Him was everywhere and the story of Him was on all lips. If only she could reach Him! But how? He passed through the streets, to be sure; it was easy to *see* Him—but to attract His notice? She found no courage in herself to press through the crowd and meet Him face to face, and beg His favor. Why should He stop and speak to her? A Ruler of the Synagogue—yes: He could go anywhere, approach anyone, even the great Prophet; but she—how could she hope to be noticed? But was it necessary to be noticed? Could she not, indeed, act unnoticed? We get a glimpse of a mind filled with superstitions; the healing power just resided in the Prophet; if she could just *touch*, touch the least thing that belonged to Him! That would be quite

enough, and she need not be known at all! See her, then, making her way with difficulty to Jesus, and see her touch and then draw back from the touch filled with the tides of a new life. Her theory about what was to happen and the manner of it was of little importance; what mattered was that she desired intensely and believed that our Lord could fulfil all her desire. She put her whole self into an ardent act of faith and the response came in answer to her appealing touch. Virtue came from our Lord and healed her. Virtue always comes from our Lord when faith like that touches Him, for He meets whose who desire Him at once with the fulfilment of their desire.

Consider, second,

Whether we have anything like the confidence in our Lord that this woman showed. We think of her as very ignorant and, it may be, think of ourselves as enlightened; but has not the effect of our enlightenment been to make it possible for us to have this simple faith which sought our Lord as aid to the sufferer? Is it not, perhaps, true that the failure of our prayers of which we so often complain is due to the doubts and reservations and hesitations that our enlightenment puts into them? It often happens that when we bring our needs to our Lord, we lack the simplicity of faith and the intensity of desire which constitutes the strongest appeal to Him. Our Lord asks us, "What wouldest thou that I should do unto thee?" not because He is ignorant of our needs, but because He waits on some strong expression of desire before he acts. We come with our hesitation, murmuring, "If thou canst do anything"; and His swift, almost impatient, answer is, "If thou canst believe; all things are

possible to him that believeth." Can we not learn that lesson of the need of spiritual movement on our part if we would call out the activity of God for us? Are we still without understanding of our Lord's stress upon faith? Or do we consider that a vague unexpectant petition fulfils all the conditions of faith? A merely wistful attitude hardly fulfils the conditions of faith; faith needs to be energetic and tenacious. It has a certain clamorous quality which knocks at the door of God to demand His attention. That is a quality our Lord often praises. "Men ought to pray and not to faint." Those of little faith call out His reproof. There is no need to fear that we shall weary God or alienate Him, so long as the cry of faith is accompanied with entire submission to His will.

Let us, then, pray,

For the unhesitating faith of the woman who is content to reach our Lord how she may. Pray, for that utter self-surrender to His will which is complete faith.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, in Thy compassion, to increase Thy faith in us; because Thou wilt not deny the aid of Thy loving-kindness to those on whom Thou bestowest a steadfast belief in Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE POST-COMMUNION COLLECT

The Post-Communion prayer is parallel to the collect for the day. As the collect opened the Mass with an indication of its intention so this collect in closing goes back and takes up the intention once more. Unfortunately our office, instead of giving us appropriate collects for each Communion, sets out only a limited

number of Post-Communions. It does however leave the celebrant free to choose his own prayer, which enables him to choose one that will be appropriate to the Mass of the day.

As a matter of personal use we may perhaps think of the final prayer of the Mass as one of self-committal to our Lord. As we complete our offering and try to respond to the grace of the sacrament that we have received, we go out "in the strength of this bread," surrendering ourselves to the impulses of the Blessed Spirit. It is for us, like the final prayer of our Lord upon the Cross, "Father into Thy hands I commend My Spirit." Our Lord has committed Himself to us, has made once more His act of humility and self-surrender; has placed Himself at the disposal of our wills. What now are we going to do with so wonderful a grace? How are we going to use such gifts as they come to us? We need to be clear that in making our communions we have not finished something; rather we have made a beginning. The significance of my communion will appear in the future.

Still we have done something. We came and knelt here and laid our special intentions before God. We offered Him our sacrifice. We made our communion for a special purpose. We presented before God a definite petition. That prayer now is in God's hands. With entire faith and confidence we are awaiting His answer.

And we know that there will be an answer. There are no unanswered prayers. There are ungranted prayers, but to say that a prayer is unanswered would mean that God paid no attention to it but brushed it aside as a matter of no importance. To believe that would be the

equivalent of atheism. It would be the affirmation of a God who does not at all care, and the service we have engaged in is the evidence of the extent to which God cares; that He cares so much as the Cross. If we were to believe that any prayer uttered from any human soul was unconsidered by God the whole fabric of our religion would collapse. It is built on the belief in the providence of God, a providence so minute that it can only be adequately described in such phrases as, "Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father." "The hairs of your head are all numbered."

That is fundamental—that God answers, that He attends to and considers each separate prayer. We must brush aside the modern infidelity that there are things which we are not to pray for. We may safely lay down this rule, that whatever we believe that it is right for us to have, it is right for us to pray for. But this other rule must go along with it, that whatever we pray for we pray that we may have it if in the wisdom of God it is good for us to have it. In prayer we are not making demands upon God; we are opening our souls, our innermost desires, to God. We are not trying to force Him; we are placing ourselves in His hands.

There are no doubt many prayers offered which give color to the accusation that the Christian is a believer in magic. The magician tries by incantations of some sort to compel God to act in a given way. He is not seeking to find God's will; he is seeking to force action of a certain kind. The essence of magic is that when certain acts are performed properly God is compelled to act in a certain way, in the way that the magician desires. There are prayers which are attempts to force God to act, which take no heed of any will of God, which when they are

ungranted react in disappointment, anger, blasphemy. This attitude is at the bottom of the wild raving we have to hear from people whose prayers, as they say, have not been answered. God, the implication is, ought not only to be good to us, but He ought to be good to us in the way we want. We are like children demanding this special thing and satisfied with nothing else. Whatever else may be said of this attitude it is not Christian.

Neither is the opposite attitude, which would limit God's answer to prayer to so-called spiritual things. This is really an attempt to solve a difficulty supposed to be raised by the law of nature. The theory seems to be that whenever anyone raises an objection to Christian belief the best thing to do is to drop the belief. It seems to be thought that by this process we shall ultimately arrive at an irreducible minimum in Christianity to which no one would object. That is conceivable. What is not conceivable is that this irreducible minimum shall be worth saving. It is time we realized that the ideas of Christian belief and practice are not detached or separated from one another, so interrelated that any one of them cannot be abandoned without injury to what is left. Our beliefs and practices, so far as they are really organic in the Catholic faith, are so related that not one can be abandoned without injury to the whole. And there is no reason why they should be abandoned. They still remain not only acceptable by faith but defensible by reason. Our theory of prayer in nowise contradicts any law of nature. It may supplement and complete what this or that person or group of persons know about nature at any given time. God not only made, but directs and controls nature, and we may safely assume that He will not contradict Himself in so doing. He may con-

tradict the assertions of Professor Y or the Reverend Dr. X, but that is another matter. The laws of nature are the formulation of what we think that we know about the universe up to date. Any new discovery may lead to a new formulation. The critic's discovery of the meaning of prayer would certainly do so. Huxley, with his usual frankness, says, "Not that I mean for a moment to say that prayer is illogical, for if the whole universe is ruled by fixed laws it is just as illogically absurd for me to ask you to answer this letter as to ask the Almighty to alter the weather."

The objection to the Christian theory of prayer which impresses many people to-day comes from the psychological province, as so many present criticisms of the Christian religion do. Psychology is a new toy for the modern mind to play with, and has for the moment largely displaced evolution, of which the modern mind has become rather tired. That mind has a way of getting bored with its accomplishments and when it does they are apt to sink to their proper place and assume their due proportion. To-day evolution, which was once as a dark cloud threatening to bury us and to sweep us all away into agnosticism or atheism, has turned out to be only a pleasant shower, watering the arid places of our theology.

To-day the crowds throng the streets and cry, "Great is the sub-conscious, the Goddess of the moderns!" The priests of the modern mind cut themselves with knives and leap about the altar of auto-suggestion. Prayer has no objective effect. It is purely a matter of auto-suggestion which may, no doubt, do much good if properly directed by a skilled operator, but has no relation to a God or to the supernatural. No doubt we shall all

become less excited after a time. There are fortunately men who appear to be quite competent psychologists who decline even now to lose their heads. I will let one such speak.

"In further support of the view that—speaking from the purely psychological point of view—much of auto-suggestion is prayer, is the fact that my medical experience shows that the difficulty that many people feel in praying is often found to have a pathological origin. Patients come to me suffering from depression who have hitherto enjoyed and taken active part in religion, who have had intense conviction, and found suddenly all their convictions have disappeared. And the sad part is that they sometimes even doubt whether they have really ever had those convictions. In those particular cases the inability to believe is one symptom of their general pathological state. Their emotional life has turned inward, they have lost touch with the outer world, they no longer feel contact with other people. In cases like this, analysis usually effects a cure. One of my patients, after three hours' analysis which elicited the causes of his general pathological state, said: 'Now I can pray again; before I could not.'

"Such a case illustrates how repression or other strain on the mind can cut a patient off and psychologically isolate him, not only from his ordinary friends and environment, but, as it were, from the universe. It also has a moral, even for those of us who consider ourselves normal in regard to the practice of prayer. If ever we find that we are getting into a state where our faith is disappearing, and we are full of intense loneliness, it may be well to analyze ourselves and our circumstances,

go back over our past lives, call up early experiences, and bring them, as well as our sins in the past, before God, and thus find a starting-point for a new faith.”¹

“Let us,” we are much exhorted, “abandon superstition.” Yes, that would be well: scientific superstitions as well as others, and having done that, “let us hold fast in the profession of our faith without wavering; for He is faithful that promised.” There has nothing happened to shake our faith in the promise. The experience the human race has of prayer has been sufficiently clear to keep them praying throughout all their history, and they will undoubtedly keep on to the end; and they will keep on because they will evermore find that they cannot get on without God, that they need prayer.

What a wonderful thing the prayer of a little child is! The unhesitating faith, the completeness of his self-committal; whether he is praying that his little sister may get well, or that his father may be converted, or that he may have a new pair of skates or a bicycle, he seems wholly admirable to me. There are no reserves about it. God is one who can do whatever He wills, and he brings his own desires and offers them to God. “Quite unintelligent,” you say. No, not quite. He is intelligent with the intelligence of love. He knows that love unlocks doors; that it opens a way to others’ hearts, and he approaches God with the same confidence with which he approaches his father or his mother. Love is the key to many secrets by which the child-mind becomes educated in the things of God. I do not believe that we have in any degree improved the child, when by a course of materialistic training we have induced him to stop praying. What is then his history? As a boy he knew the

¹ Wm. Brown, M. D. *Theology and Life*, p. 53.

stars and he loved to stand on the open hill-top and look up into the heavens where Orion moves across the sky and the Great Bear prowls about the Pole Star. He loved to weave his own myths of the constellation. Now his sight has failed. For years he has seen no stars. When his friends speak of the beauty of the heavens he says pityingly, "I used to believe that I saw such things." He speaks now of hallucination, of auto-suggestion, of superstition, of things which we outgrow as our education broadens. And all the while Orion moves across the sky and the Great Bear prowls about the Pole.

There are spiritual tragedies like that. The boy who prayed with such an utter trust in God goes to college, has his faith destroyed by his Professor of Psychology. He goes into the business world and learns that the rule is "business is business," and he finds that a simple Christianity is impossible in union with the business he has to conduct in the face of an utterly merciless competition. He goes into society and he finds that his morals will not fit in with the social environment, and he throws them over and becomes the prey of the gambler, the bootlegger, the harlot. With ready phrases he talks in his Club, at the weekend party, at the dinner table, of Christianity as a thing outworn. His associates speak of him as broadminded; as having thrown off the bonds of superstition; as having achieved intellectual liberty. One wonders if there are not moments when he looks back and envies the little boy that prayed for a pair of skates. Through the leaden materialism of his daily life does not there sometimes break a gleam of reality?

Within the town of Buffalo
Are prosy men with leaden eyes.

Like ants they worry to and fro,
(Important men, in Buffalo).
But only twenty miles away
A deathless glory is at play:
Niagara, Niagara.

Above the town a tiny bird,
A shining speck at sleepy dawn,
Forgets the ant-hill so absurd,
This self-important Buffalo.
Descending twenty miles away
He bathes his wings at break of day—
Niagara, Niagara.

We come back to this, the cornerstone of practical everyday religion, that God does indeed answer prayer. "But are you not really avoiding the difficulty," someone may say; "doesn't an answer to prayer mean the granting of the thing asked for?" I do not see why it does, any more than in the case of a request preferred to a human being. When the child asks his mother for a penny she may say yes or she may say no. In either case she answers. The prayer claimed her deliberate attention and we may assume that her answer was not the whim of the moment, but embodies what in her judgment was for the best interest of her child. Our Lord put the case clearly enough when He said, stating the general rule, "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." And then goes on to expound the mode of the giving. "What man is there of you, who if his son ask bread will he give him a stone, or if he ask a fish will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall

your Father which is in heaven give good things unto them that ask Him?"

Is not this plain enough, or, if you insist, "I mean by a prayer that is answered a prayer that gains what it wants," I must ask you the blunt question, "Do you actually mean that you want God to give you what He in His wisdom knows is not best for you? Could you really respect, not to say worship, such a God as that?" Of course you don't mean that. Of course you understand that God will act as a good and wise father acts in answering prayer with intelligence and not like a weak and foolish father, who yields to the teasing of his child. If we are wise we try to learn from God's wisdom and find from the petitions which are not granted light and help come into our lives.

"A woman once told me that she had all her life had urgent reason to petition God for two material benefits, and had never received them. Often in indignation she would demand of heaven the reason, and listen to the silence, and try to convince herself that God was not. But, although surrounded by agnostic influences and accepting no religious authority, but for herself examining all doctrines, she was amazed to find that every year her belief that God did indeed hear and answer prayer grew stronger. . . . It occurred to her to observe how this certainty had come upon her unawares. She reflected that, although she had seemed to receive nothing, inextinguishable hope and the love of prayer had been increasingly hers."¹

There are many prayers which one may not unjustly call prayers of sloth, prayers which call upon God to do for us what we might do for ourselves. God gives freely,

¹ *Absente Reo*, pp. 19-20.

but He doesn't act alone. He requires our cooperation. This plainly recurring principle of the Christian life has to be insisted upon. Someone has stated this principle in its application to prayer thus: "To pray as though God had to do everything. To work as though all depended upon ourselves." We limit God when we pray and then sit down and fold our hands. As old Dr. South put it, "God is pleased to vouchsafe the best that He can give only to the best that we can do."

Whatever we are praying for there is commonly something that we can do. We can at least join a good work or an act of sacrifice to the prayer, to give it, as it were, force to demonstrate if only to ourselves our earnestness. We cannot be very sure of that unless we are at pains to test it, and the shallowness of our spiritual aspiration, our desire, is often revealed by the acid test of a good work. "Faith without works is dead," and I fancy that the deadness of a good deal of prayer does not require much demonstration. Earnestness and sincerity however seek an outlet and we can hardly be deceived unless we want to be by any counterfeit. There are counterfeit good works as there are counterfeit coins of every denomination. A modern novelist says of one of her characters that he had never done much in the world, but that he had always hustled. That is quite a familiar character in church circles. And this particular character-quality is not only carried into prayer. One is familiar with the person who "hustles" through an endless quantity of collects and litanies, but whose time is otherwise pretty full and whose purse strings are very tight. It is a familiar variant of saying, "Lord, Lord."

No doubt for the adult prayer is an art that has to be learned. The simple prayer of the child sometimes has

to be transcended by the prayer of the adult. No art is learned without practice, spiritual arts less than all. The theory that anyone can pray is true only of the simplest forms of spiritual self-expression. Anyone can ask the heavenly Father for the supplying of his needs, but that is not the whole of prayer, only the beginning of it. The end is a far cry. On the steep and rugged path we pass upward from height to height by the expenditure of much spiritual energy. This, however, is not a treatise on prayer but only some practical suggestions, and if we find the heights of prayer difficult and recollection hard to achieve we can take courage in the words of Richard Rolle. "Although we cannot gather our hearts together as we would, yet may we not leave off but little by little we should study to grow in prayer, that at the last Jesus Christ may stable us, to which meditation helps, if it pass not measure and manner."

It is our conviction that our desires and aspirations are in the hands of our Father, and that whatsoever we ask according to His will He giveth us, and whatsoever else we may have asked, we have asked strength and we know it has been placed at our disposal.

Man is commonly consumed by conceit. His confidence in himself and his ability is often unlimited. "It costs a great deal of trouble not to be of the same opinion as our self-love, and not to be too ready to believe in the good taste of those who believe in our merits." But strangely when it comes to a matter of spiritual accomplishment we are unexpectedly modest. We have great confidence in our ability to conquer the world and little confidence in our ability to conquer self. We can draw up a map of life for those whom we are directing; we find it difficult to follow the paths we have indicated

as helpful. In other words, the strength we boast of fails us in spiritual matters. Naturally the trouble is that our unaided strength is incompetent to deal with spiritual matters. Our strength is an important element as we have seen in the solution of spiritual problems. Such problems require our cooperation, and we fail inevitably if we do not exercise ourselves. As a Spanish philosopher, Unamino, puts it, "If man folds his hands, God goes to sleep." Our cooperation means the use of a gift, and that gift is a gift of spiritual insight and strength which we receive from our communions. One conceives the spirit of the communicant, as that into which God ceaselessly pours Himself. Think of the soul that morning by morning kneels at the altar to receive the Bread of Life, "the food of the strong." Here is the use of the renewed presence of God, here is the ceaseless action of Grace. It requires but an act of the will on our part to connect all this spiritual energy with the machinery of our daily life. It requires only that we place our human powers at the disposal of God to have them become the instruments of the divine action. One understands our Lord's miracles, for example, not as the overriding of the humanity by the divinity, still less as the action of the divinity apart from the humanity, but one understands them as the action of the humanity which has made itself a willing instrument of God. So too we have no difficulty in understanding the miracles of the saints when we contemplate the perfectness of their self-surrender. It is only those who utterly fail to understand the working of grace, what it means to be in love with God, who can find any difficulty in miracles as a mode of supernatural action. That that mode of action is not seen more fre-

quently is due simply to the rarity of souls who make a complete surrender to the divine Guest.

Apart, however, from miracles in the ordinary sense of the word there are many operations of grace. Fortunately God doesn't wait for our complete surrender but grants His aid to our cooperation in whatever degree we are able to give it. He feeds us with milk and not with meat until our spiritual powers of assimilation are well developed. He helps as He can. We must give all we can as the basis of His action.

Give all thou canst; high heaven rejects the lore
Of nicely calculated less or more."

We need to understand this operation of God in man's soul as we study the lives of the saints. So many of them are simple and ignorant folk. They are without the human qualities that we set store by. They are often without education, without social experience, without what we call "knowledge of the world." Yet they, these humble folk, succeed where we fail. They exercise a power over other lives which the trained man or woman of the world utterly lacks. I suppose most of us do not have to go to the lives of the saints to find illustrations of this. We have ourselves witnessed this strange power of sanctity. Astronomers tell us that sometimes a star which has stood far down in their catalogues as a star of the seventh or eighth magnitude will blaze out with a light outshining the planets. So some humble soul that we have passed unnoticed, thinking it incapable of much in the way of spiritual achievement (if we thought of it at all) will blaze out with unexpected heroism. It

will meet the demands of some special crisis with a calm, unshaken faith. It will reveal a hidden life of prayer, or a life of severe self-discipline which surprises us; but it would not have surprised us if we could have seen the constant life of self-surrender. It had long been offering no opposition to the divine will. Our troubles come mostly from our opposition. They are the heat generated by the friction between our soul and the soul of God.

The possibilities of the Christian life in the way of spiritual accomplishment are unlimited. The *Acta Sanctorum* is the demonstration of that fact. It is true that we are not all saints, but it is also true that we may all be saints. Anyone can become a saint, that is, a person living in a state of habitual grace, who wants sufficiently to be one. In theory it is simple enough.

"Le fond du vrai saint est une relation directe du fidèle, qui aime Dieu infiniment, avec le Dieu de sa foi, un droit entretien, intime et personnel, entre la créature aimante et le Créateur infiniment aimé."¹

In the strength of the life of sanctity lies all our hope for the future of the Kingdom of Heaven here, for the prosperity of the Church Militant. "If Christianity is to spread it must be spread by Christians and the one and only effective means of doing so is not argument but holiness." We are doing more to convert the world by the cultivation of personal holiness, by the example of a devout life, than by all the means of propaganda that we commonly resort to. The true weakness of the Christian Church is the weakness of its witness to the grace of God working in it. A divided Church, a Church torn by the storms of uncharity, does not, and cannot, give any ef-

¹ Suárez. Péguy. p. 31.

fective testimony to the nature and meaning of God, neither can an individual life. Our testimony must be harmonious with that to which we testify if it is to be at all effective.

And therefore one feels that one of the greatest lessons that we can take away from the Mass is the lesson that is drawn from the vision of the renunciation of Christ. Christ pleases not Himself. "He thought equality with God not a prize to be grasped at." It is the sanctified, humble Christ that we have been offering and receiving in the Mass and it is precisely this Christ that we have to present to the world. Until we have learned the value and power of renunciation we have not grasped the essential meaning of Christianity. The Christianity which wants to reign with Christ before it has suffered with Him has lost its way in the wilderness and missed the promised land.

The horror with which the modern world regards asceticism is amusing. Nowhere, save among thoroughly convinced Catholics, is the discipline of the body for spiritual ends held as even conceivable. Yet it is not that we have forgotten the body in the pursuit of the spirit. Not at all!

"Brother Ass is entirely in the ascendant just now. Every one is considering the body and how it ought to be dieted and how exercised, and the doctor is a far greater autocrat than the priest ever was; so that to bid for pleasures and rewards that are not bodily is not popular. The modern man diets to get 'uric acid' out of his system, the monk of old dieted in order to get strength into his soul. The modern woman gets up early, not in order to seek the Holy Spirit by prayer, but to do breathing exercises to give capacity to her lungs. And the quaint-

est thing to the looker-on at these ridiculous rites is that their devotees are so weak and so miserable; whereas, when Brother Ass is treated to a little wholesome neglect, he generally becomes a contented and obedient animal.”¹

The Catholic does not contend that the body is evil and that it should be suppressed as much as possible. His contention is that it is an instrument, not an end in itself; whether that end be a false asceticism or an equally false and more disastrous self-indulgence.

“Mortification is not a sacrificing of the body to the alleged interests of the soul; it is the expression of the soul’s regard for the body as an instrument of holiness.” A philosophy of pain for pain’s sake is as utterly false as any other philosophy which makes man’s nature its own end.

“The Cross *for* the Cross, pain *for* pain, humiliations *for* themselves, are not good. Pain and death in sacrifice are essentially for life; and in the purpose of God they are for the life of love. The soul that loves finds in them the supreme mode of proving to itself that it loves, and above all of testifying to God its love. Thus here below death is for life; but who shall tell the life and joy that in eternity are prepared by sacrifice?”²

When once we have made our answer to God’s appeal and have placed our lives utterly in His hands, not to be sheltered and guarded but to be used for those purposes we have attained that feeling of security which the child feels when it goes out for a walk through the city streets with its hand in the hand of the father. Nothing can befall us but what God wills to happen and whatever befalls will be for our good. God may lead us over rough

¹ Honnor Morten.

² Suavé, *Marie Intime*, p. 400.

places. He may demand of us that we enter the most difficult contests. He may end by inviting us to come up and hang beside Him on the Cross. What makes the discipline of life tolerable, or indeed possible, is that it is God who asks it and that He asks it as an aid to Him in His work. What we could not do alone we can do with God, and with our hand in God's hand we feel that we walk in safety.

And that is the great thing, is it not? Not that life is easy and shielded, but that it is safe in God's hands and is fulfilling His purposes: that there is a Providence which guides it and shows its attainments of its ends. It is so discouraging to see Christians who are distrustful and complaining of their state of life; whose whole attitude implies, whatever may be their theory, a disbelief in the love and care of God. There are strange people who console others with pious words about God's love and care who utterly break down and rebel when God asks anything of them. If there be any providence in God at all it is a providence which guides in pain and sorrow as well as in health and joy.

For the sacrifice of the Mass has brought this whole lesson to us. We go out ready to offer ourselves to the divine will, convinced that in that will is our peace. We have been participating in the greatest demonstration of love that the world has ever seen, the demonstration of the meaning of the divine love. If we cannot trust that, there is nothing on earth or in heaven that we can trust and our lives are adrift on an unknown sea without hope of reaching any port. But we are confident that this sacrifice we have been offering is an unveiling of the heart of God, is the message of God to us; a message of encouragement and hope.

Also it is a challenge and a summons. The Cross is set up on a high mountain overlooking all human life. As the Crucifix stands over the altar so that whenever we raise our eyes we see the meaning of God set out plainly before us, so in our vision we see this same Cross overlooking all the world, all life. That is, this message must be brought into relation with God and purified and consecrated through the Cross. The way of the Cross, the way of sacrifice, is the way that leadeth into the holiest of all, and no soul shall enter into the presence of God save it be counter-signed with the sign of the Cross.

So we go out from Mass having accomplished one more stage in our spiritual experience, a stage which has inspired us with utter confidence and love. Once more we have experienced that love. Once more we have received Love Incarnate. Once more we have been filled with the fullness of God. How shall we not go out filled with the joy and gladness of those who have been accepted and made instruments of the divine purpose and

As those who carry music in their heart,
Through dusty lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet
Because their secret souls a holier strain repeat.

THE THIRTIETH MEDITATION
THE PEACE AND BLESSING

The *Peace* and *Blessing* are preceded in practically all other liturgies by what is called the Dismissal. In the Latin Mass the priest says (or the deacon sings) "Ite, missa est," that is, "Go, it is the dismissal," or "Go, the mass is ended," which is followed by the response, "Thanks be to God." This is the form of Dismissal on all "joyful" days. On those "sad" days, when the *Gloria in Excelsis* is not said, "Let us bless the Lord" is substituted for "Ite, missa est." Then comes the *Blessing*, except at Masses for the dead, when, in place of the *Blessing*, "May they rest in peace" is said. The *Peace* which precedes the *Blessing* in our Mass is taken from Phil. iv, 7. It is not found in the Latin Mass. The *Blessing* at the end of Mass is a late feature. Originally the Dismissal was the conclusion, after which the celebrant simply kissed the altar and departed. A very natural instinct suggested that he bless the people as he went and later on the custom and the words became fixed.

Let us listen to the words of our Lord:

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

Let us picture:

OUR Lord preparing the Apostles for the time when they shall be left without His visible support to face the work He is giving them to do. What He foresees as their danger is that they shall be overwhelmed by sorrow and despair and thereby unfitted to meet the battle with the world that awaits them. We feel through the words of our Lord the perplexity of mind with which the Apostles listen to Him, and the difficulty that He has in making them at all understand what He means by His departure. Had they not recognised Him as the Messiah, and was it not the very mark of the Messiah, the very thing that He came for, that He should set up the Kingdom of God upon earth? They had supposed that they were approaching the hour of triumph—what then is all this about parting and sorrow? “We cannot tell what He saith.” All that He says must remain quite dark to them until it is illumined by future events, by the Resurrection and the Ascension. Then will become plain the contrast between what the world gives and what Christ gives; then they will come to understand the meaning of His gift of peace. We never quite believe in the death of those on whom we have come to depend no

matter how much they speak of it and try to prepare us. We can never understand what it will be to be without them while we sit talking to them. So it was with the Apostles; they were saddened and perplexed by our Lord's words about His death; but they were without comprehension of the world that they would move in after that death took place and they went forth as His representatives. No words could make them understand; but when the events made them understand, then the words came back to their memory and they found the meaning and comfort of them.

Consider, first,

That the peace and blessing of their life in Christ came to them as an experience when it seemed to them that they had lost all. Then the Shepherd was taken away and the sheep were on the point of being scattered; when, their Master dead and their enemies triumphant, they were ready to abandon their mission and go back to their old life—then came the restored Presence of their Lord. Hope was born in the mysterious intercourse of the Forty Days; it was perplexed by the departure of the Ascension; it was restored finally and forever at Pentecost by the acquisition of a new sense of the Indwelling Christ. For them the two lines of our Lord's prophecy disentangled themselves and became intelligible in their daily experience. "In the world ye shall have tribulation." That prophecy was speedily realised as they faced a hostile world with a teaching that it did not want and a mission that it rejected. Tribulation enough as the years went by! But that did not matter, as the other thread of the prophecy emerged as an experienced fact—"in me ye shall have peace." In me—that was the

truth that saved and explained. The tribulation might come abundantly, and in forms that they never could have expected, but it came to those who had found the meaning of being in Christ and so it came in vain so far as any power was in it to shake them from their allegiance or to disturb their calm. They faced the world-storms as those who were not of the world because they had risen above it to another plane of existence, as those who were in Christ. They are already living as those who have entered into the peace of God. They now know on whom they have believed, and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, keeps them and protects them and shelters them from all the tribulation of the world. In Christ they have, like Christ, overcome the world.

Consider, second,

The promise reaches even to us. One of the great tests of the vitality of our religion is whether we have experienced this promise as true. We have no doubt some experience of the world that we can designate as tribulation, but have we found it overcome by the Peace of God? Our attitude toward tribulation is apt to be one of flight rather than of conquest—our impulse is to avoid it rather than to transcend it. But tribulation is a necessary outcome of being in the world and not of it; the world persecutes those who decline and renounce it. There is no possibility of being in the peace of the world and the peace of God at the same time because we can only be at peace with that to which we belong; and if we belong to Christ we have given over and crucified the world and the flesh and all that belongs to them. To be in union with the world is to be out of Christ; to be in union with Christ

is to be out of the world—in it but not of it. And surely for us there can never be any question of worldliness if once we have found the peace that passeth understanding. That is so all pervading in our lives that it compensates for all else; or rather, we never think of the peace as compensation but as joy unspeakable and full of glory. When the peace of the Blessed Trinity enfolds us the desire of all that is out of God becomes incomprehensible. That restlessness of soul, those swarming, teasing appetites which spring from the desire of the world, all vanish when we enter into God's peace. They were tribulation as long as they drew us and held us, but now we are free from them and know their vanity. In the world we *had* tribulation: yes, we remember that, and look back to it with wonder that we actually wanted it! But now that we are in Christ, in the embrace of peace, we want nothing out of Him, nothing that does not come from Him as his gift.

Let us, then, pray,

For grace to seek that close union with our Lord the end of which is perfect peace. Pray, that that union may be so close that you may be delivered from the disquietude of the world.

O Eternal Son, who abidest forever, consubstantial with the Father, equal with Him as enthroned and as Creator; Thou, without being changed, didst assume our flesh, and being made man, like unto us in all but sin, wast made our Mediator with the Father. Thou hast broken down the partition wall, and hast reconciled the earthly with the heavenly, and made twain one of Thine Incarnation. Thou saidst to Thy holy Apostles and dis-

ciples, "My peace I give unto you"; grant us now that peace, Lord.

THE BLESSING

So the peace of God descends upon those who are in union with Him. Union is of necessity peace. Our trouble in the pursuit of peace largely is that we are seeking external peace, that is, comfortable adjustment to the world as it is. It is on that conception of peace that our Lord commented when He said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." There can be no promise of peace but the Christian. And the world and the things of the world can never be enduringly satisfying. The Christian must remain in some sense a stranger in it. It is the mark of the sincerity of his religion that he becomes more and more dissatisfied with the world and what the world can offer him, and more and more dissatisfied with his own accomplishment. If he finds that his life is leading to increased satisfaction with the world, if he finds that he is settling down in an attitude of toleration and has ceased to protest, he may assume that there is something the matter with his religion. Certainly it is quite different from the religious experience of those Christians who carry the Gospel through the world. For them "without were fightings and within were fears." It is foolish to expect that the proclamation of the Gospel, or the living of the Gospel will do other than rouse opposition and a state of warfare. We desire peace while the battle is unwon, the desire of the fainéant and the coward.

The peace that we are entitled to is the gift of God, that fruit of the spirit which is the result of our con-

formity to the will of God and the life of grace. This peace is an interior thing and is our support in all the disquietudes of this world. We face the Christian warfare undaunted because we have peace with God. Our spiritual troubles arise, our doubts and our hesitations, our feebleness in serving, our weariness in well-doing, not as we want to assume, from the wear and tear of the daily battle with imperfection and sin, but from the low state of our spiritual vitality; from the fact that our relation to God is imperfectly sustained. Why is one tired out at the end of a day's work? Why does the farmer, or the ditch digger, drag himself wearily to bed? Because the labor of the day has exhausted his store of physical energy and he must recruit it before he can labor more. Why does the Christian say, "I am weary of the combat with evil," except that his spiritual energy is exhausted. If he is to keep on that must be recruited. What produces in him discouragement, despair? It is the spiritual exhaustion which comes upon a soul which does not take care to recruit spiritual strength; which does not seek to be at peace with God in order that it may be strong to combat for Him.

The soul of the Christian must be like the depths of the sea, undisturbed by what goes on on the surface. The storms beat there, that is the place of storms. That is where the children of God combat with the children of Satan. But they can only fight victoriously if they are all the time drawing strength from the undisturbed depths where they are at peace with God.

Along with the gift of peace comes the blessing of God. We may, I think, understand a blessing as almost sacramental in its character. The meaning of the Blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy

Ghost, is really brought out in S. Paul's form of it: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost." Grace, love, fellowship, these we must expect to grow and increase in us through the blessing of God. In another passage S. Paul presents the nature of the blessing of peace to us from a most instructive angle of vision: "The very God of peace sanctify you holy, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be presented blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us look at the peace and blessing then as an aid and accompaniment in the entire sanctification of the Christian. We look on our personality as an indivisible whole, wholly present in all our actions, but yet it is possible for us to regard the personality as it acts in one way or another, as one or the other element or aspect of it is predominant. The whole man is in the act of willing, still we may treat the will in separateness, understanding that we are not dividing the person into arbitrary sections. And it is permitted us to treat the passions or appetites and also the reason in the same distinct way.

The first conscious spiritual work that we have to face, I suppose, is the discipline of the passions. We come to something like adult consciousness and a realization of our responsibility in the conduct of life and find ourselves already the plaything of our passions. The religious problem first presents itself to us as a problem of control. We see that it is nobler to be the servant of God than the plaything of our passions, but our passions are well developed and in good working order, and our desire to serve and our spiritual power of control is very elementary. It is the fundamental difficulty of self-control

that we have already become uncontrolled before we understand that we ought to be anything else. Our animal nature is in full action before any true intellectual check is possible. The only efficient check in this early stage of our development comes from our education, and one would think that severe discipline would be regarded by educational authorities as of primary importance. On the contrary it seems to be considered of very small importance indeed. The discipline of childhood has been eliminated from our educational theories, and largely from our family life. It is rare to find a child who is taught the value of self-control, who is trained in the use of his powers and affections as means of character growth, still less as forms of the service of God.

You have perhaps lived awhile by the side of some little lake, a thing of joy and beauty, set, it may be, in the midst of a pine wood that all day long whispers about it, or in the heart of some valley where the willows and the alders fringe its banks. You will recall some spring morning when the melting snow released the floods and their waters came rushing down the brooks and poured into the quiet lake and it became a seething mass of water, stained with mud and soil torn from the banks of brooks as the flood came. Overhead the cloud masses floated across the blue of the sky. You remember how wonderful it was to stand on the banks and watch the sky reflected in the still water, but to-day it is not so. In the tossing water the sky is reflected only in broken fragments. Then there came another day when the restlessness of the water subsided and once more its calm showed the perfect face of the sky.

Youth is something like that. The peace and calm of childhood passes. The unquestioning prayers, the eyes

that unclouded look to God, the soul which is unstained, these pass. The tumult of the passions breaks. God is forgotten, or buried out of the consciousness. But He is only hidden. He waits till the waters are abated. With maturity He will be found again.

Or He may be, for He is found in maturity by those who seek Him, by those who have found the means of self-discipline, the means of directing their natural powers to their proper ends. For these powers which, unrestrained and mis-directed, are so lawless and destructive, are not bad in themselves. They are the raw material wherewith we have to work. They are for strength if they are guided to proper things. The control and discipline of them is the building of character. They are part of that being which is to be "sanctified wholly." It is not a misfortune to have strong passions, rather it is a misfortune to have weak ones. The calamity is that we are not taught the use of them. It is the business of the steam to drive the engine to get work done. If anything goes wrong with the machinery there is an accident, the boiler explodes, the train goes off the bank, the steamer is wrecked. But the steam is not to blame. You don't say that there was too much steam, you say the engine was defective. The passions are the steam of human nature. They are good but they have to be guided, controlled, directed; they have to be trained and educated. They need a master. The heart is all right but it needs the head, and because the heart is a peril it must be directed, because it is a force it must not be destroyed.

What then the passions need is not destruction, if that were possible, nor suppression, but direction, training. Much of our spiritual training is directed to this end. It is not permitted a Christian to plead in excuse of un-

spiritual conduct that he has strong passions. Such a plea reveals him as a spiritually careless or indifferent person. A prisoner at his trial pleaded an uncontrollable impulse. The judge replied, "An uncontrollable impulse is an impulse uncontrolled." Such pleas are confessions of incompetence in dealing with life. Control is necessary, not only spiritually but socially, and society can not recognize the right of the undisciplined person to plead his incompetence as an excuse for his crimes.¹ The same fact holds racially. The modern scientist has appraised it, "It is certainly that individually and racially survival is with the self-controlled." An education therefore in which the very primary aim is not discipline is self-condemned. Instruction is good only for those who are trained to use it.

To a certain extent our social discipline is enforced by social pressure. We may exalt liberty, but in no society is an individual ever permitted to do as he likes. Spiritually we have to impose our own training, and one consequence is that we often have incompetent trainers. It is well to put the matter out of our hands as much as possible and to put ourselves to school to competent masters, which masters are not wanting. We have the whole spiritual experience of past generations in the lives of the saints. Coming as we do to an understanding of the nature and necessity of discipline in adult life we expect that an acquisition of a spiritually controlled character will not be a holiday task. It requires the steady concen-

¹ An exception is surprisingly made of the granting of divorce. Those who have shown themselves incompetent to carry on the marriage relation, to conduct intelligently the family life, who have showed themselves disturbing elements in that state, are permitted to give the world a fresh exhibition of their incapacity.

tration of our best efforts. We may expect that it will hurt. Our Lord said to a certain saint, "Those who take honey from the hive get stung but the honey remains." And that is enough, is it not? We have achieved the result we aimed at. The fact that it was difficult to attain it is negligible. What we are in pursuit of is a great thing, the perfect happiness that flows from the peace of God. "And perfect happiness is inconsistent with imperfection. Happiness therefore presupposes discipline."

And this implies constant driving of the will. More and more one is led to the conclusion that we do what we will to do. Professions of inability to do this or that, of lack of time, of opportunity, of strength, one more and more finds go back to our wills; from the man who cannot keep an appointment, to the man who cannot break a habit. The can't is won't, is deficiency not of opportunity or of power, but of desire.

"The power is ours to make or mar
Our fate as on the earliest morn.
The darkness and the radiance are
Creatures within our spirit born."

The question we have to raise is not the superficial one that we can do what we want to do, but the fundamental one, why do we want to do one thing rather than another? Why do we choose as we do? That is, a moral and spiritual education does not begin and end a rule directing a certain choice, but concerns itself with the education of the person to prefer one sort of life rather than another. A certain amount of compulsion in external matters may at times be necessary in the education of the child or in the control of the ignorant, but the important matter is the education of the person in the whole realm of de-

sire. The will must be directed to the accomplishment of choosing things. We may be convinced that certain ends are good, and yet not have sufficient will to overcome the obstacles which stand in the way of our attainment, especially the obstacles of the passions which are drawing the will in a contrary direction. The will must be educated to enforce the choice we have definitely made. "It is the will that forms our character and gives us value and worth, not what we have felt and thought but what we have willed to become as the result of our thoughts and feelings."

The whole question as to how far we are free to act is one that we cannot take up here. The Christian religion, and indeed any sort of moral responsibility, requires freedom of the will. Human life can only be conducted, socially speaking, on the basis of a belief in freedom. It is no doubt true that there is a certain degree of determination in our conduct at all times. That only means that we never do or can act as though we had never acted before. What I do to-day is the resultant of all my past. It is the outcome of all I did yesterday and the day before, and what I do to-morrow will be the outcome of what I do to-day. But this sequence is not wholly mechanical. My free personality enables me to select and introduces new elements into my experience. There are but a limited number of primary colors, but they can be combined in an infinite variety of ways. The resources of the painter's palette are unlimited, so the factors which enter into the formation of character are capable of unlimited modes of combination, and the result is the infinite variety of human character, and we are masters of the combination to a great extent. No doubt when we face the problem certain combinations have

been made. Our heredity, our education have had definite results. They define the problems with which we have to deal. They make certain lines of action easy and certain difficult; certain affections have been developed and certain atrophied, but after all that only means that no two human beings are utterly alike. At any point in our career we use our freedom to inject new elements into the combinations of our life. We conceive ideals of what we want to be. We set ourselves to suppress that in us which is antagonistic to our ideals and we develop that which is favorable. We have been giving free rein to a passion which we now seek to restrain. We have been feeding an appetite which we now starve. That which in mechanical evolution is still an unaccountable factor, the spontaneous variation in a certain direction, we show in character evolution to be a matter of voluntary selection. We put into experience by our free choice the variations which we judge will determine evolution in a chosen direction. This is what we mean by our freedom, and our education of the will is a training of it to enforce the desires that we have selected.

But why have we selected one desire or class of desires rather than another? That is where our reason comes in. It is very much the fashion to-day to deny the supremacy, or even the power of reason. One school of thinkers tells us that we are mere machines responding automatically to stimuli. Another can see no motive back of human conduct but the passions. "The obsession of logic lies at the root of much misunderstanding of human character. We try to explain actions by reference to logical motive and we fail because the motives are very commonly not logical and are in fact more powerful than any that logic is capable of producing. If we

wish to understand human character the first and foremost proposition that we have to grasp is that motives do not spring from intellect but from feeling. That the world of human life is governed not by reason but by passion, emotion and sentiment.”¹

This position has enough truth in it to be plausible but it is not the whole truth. If the philosopher and psychologist who write books to prove that we are either not free, or are the creatures of impulse, believed their own books, they would not write them, for such books have no significance save as they are attempts to influence conduct by an appeal to reason. No doubt there is a vast amount of logical juggling in the world which goes under the name of reason, and which is not really so. Still reason remains an element in the human makeup which has oftentimes a deciding voice in conduct. We may abuse it but in the end we have to depend upon it.

That of course does not mean that what we take to be reason is always such. What we call reasoning is often an attempt to find ground for action that we have already determined upon, or in justification of action which we have already committed, but the fact that a thing can be counterfeited does not prove that it doesn’t exist. The very fact that we resort to the counterfeit is evidence of belief in the existence of the truth. We may be stimulated by interest or passion to false reasoning, but also we may be aroused by our needs to seek a rational ground of action. That the need of interest stimulates us in our search does not prove that it will control our conclusions.

Ultimately of course this question can only be decided by an appeal to experience and I fancy that the experience

¹ Elliot, *Human Character*, p. 2.

is universal of being convinced and led to action which is contrary to our seeming interest, and certainly to our inclination, conduct which quite counters passion, suppresses emotion and declines to justify sentiment. We do those things for the reason that we have arrived by the use of our reason at the conclusion that we ought to do them. In other words, we all know from our experience that action can be determined and guided by reason. The grounds upon which we act may be good or bad, right or wrong, but they are not the determinations of passion. We have weighed the alternative of conduct and have decided in a given way as the result.

It is obvious therefore that these decisions should be guided by the light of the Holy Spirit. That is the great function of the Holy Spirit in human life, to guide. He takes of Christ's and shows it unto us. He guides us from the outside by revealing truth. He guides us from the inside by leading us to an appreciation of the truth, to love and to desire it. To discipline life therefore in accordance with the mind of the Holy Spirit of God is the work of the Christian. Here is a standard set before him; the ideal proffered; the vision revealed; and this ideal, this vision, is not always attractive to him. The natural man doesn't aspire to the stature of a saint, he is much more likely to rebel against it. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know Him, because they are spiritually discerned." History is the proof of this, the history of the Christian centuries (as they are curiously called) is much more a history of the rejection of the Gospel than of its accomplishment. No man can read intelligently the Gospel and then turn to its history in the world and then believe that men are

drawn to it by a mere passion or emotion. Where there has been a response to the Gospel, which is a reality, it has been the result of the reason determining that this response ought to be made. I am not concerned with such acceptance of the Gospel as is due to inheritance, or social or other pressure, but with the test case where there is intelligent acceptance and practice. There the reason has acted, and has acted under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

The Christian doesn't claim to be an independent person even in his judgments. We may say paradoxically that though he trusts reason he distrusts it. That is, he has no overweening confidence in his own reasoning. He wants to be helped and guided. He has seen how easy it is to go wrong and to be mistaken. He has not an arrogant self-satisfaction in his conclusions, because they are his. He doesn't want them to be his peculiar possession. He has to estimate the evidence, but he likes to have his conclusions corroborated, hence his affection for authority, which seems to shock so many people. He loves authority, not because it relieves him from the nuisance of thinking, of "making up his mind." It doesn't do that. He has to make up his mind about authority. The possibility of "blind obedience" and "mental suicide" is an illusion of the sceptic. No, authority does not remove responsibility but only cooperates with the reason and aids it. It is not a substitute who acts for us, but a friend who helps us to bear our burden. It is not a tyrant who says, "Do this." It is a counsellor who says, "I have found this true." We really would not find a world pleasant in which everyone hid his experience and declined to declare his conclusions. It would not be

a friendly world. Authority declares its experience and asks us to verify it in ours.

This personality of ours that seems so manifold, and is in reality one, achieves its fullest liberty of expression through union with God. When we are one with God we are not lost in God. We have not abandoned our power of personal expression. Quite the contrary! For the first time we have attained the ability to express ourselves fully. Liberty is the result of union, the grace which is the result of union giving us the capacity for self-expression which we lacked before. Self only shows what it is capable of when it is vivified in God. We now have freedom to walk straight and to think right. No one can want liberty to fall into error or superstition. It is an illusion that power to err is freedom. We may speak great swelling words of liberty and yet be in bondage.

If we have let go the guidance of authority and repudiated intellectual guidance we are simply adrift on a sea of speculation where there are only opinions and not truth. We have enrolled ourselves among those whose religion is a moving picture of contemporary speculation and not settled truth. Though the Liberal talks a good deal about science and scientific method, he is very far indeed from taking up a scientific attitude. What is a scientific attitude? Let us hear an expert.

"A science, according to the general conception, consists in a systematized ensemble of knowledge of facts, each clearly defined yet all so closely related as to form a veritable system in which each supports and explains the other in logical sequence: as, for example, in mathematics. . . . Science thus understood acquires a dogmatic

authority. It is opposed absolutely not only to ignorance, but also to more or less probable opinion or belief. When once established it becomes as immutable as Truth itself. It is transmitted through teaching; and the disciple or pupil can but accept it docilely from the hands of those who have received and treasured it."¹

The modern liberal thinker is quite unconcerned, so far as one can see, with truth. His whole energy is spent, not in the discovery of spiritual truth, but in the study of what is the latest speculation. He is not so much concerned to know whether an opinion is true as to know whether it is safe. The modern liberal is perpetually seeking intellectual isles of safety, about which the tides of traffic flow, leaving him undisturbed. He expects to arrive at an understanding with "science" or the "modern mind" which will leave him in peaceful possession of some remnants of his former wealth. He is like a shipwrecked sailor who has sought to save his ship by jettisoning everything it contains, only to find himself confronted with starvation in an empty hulk. Whatever may be the truth about all these things, the Catholic religion teaches that the man who trains and uses the riches of his personality in the service of God will attain that inner peace which passeth understanding, but the soul must be trained. As Mother Stuart put it, "We should take our soul as our first and favorite pupil, give it every advantage we can." Not only believe, but act on belief. There are unfortunately many who believe whose training has not made clear to them the mode of action which should follow belief. The Christian religion lives in the world to-day because men have trained themselves to use it, have not let it remain a conviction of the intellect, a conclu-

¹ Boirac, *The Psychology of the Future*, p. 1.

sion of the reason, but have felt its beauty and truth and have willed to put it into effect. The alternative to effective possession of truth is spiritual death. The un-nourished soul withers and dies.

If I lay waste, and wither up with doubt
The blessed fields of heaven where once my faith
Possessed itself serenely safe from death;
If I deny the things past finding out;
Or if I orphan my own soul of One
That seemed a Father, and make void the place
Within me where He dwelt in power and grace,
What do I gain by what I have undone?

"But the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is so much of our nature that is yet unsanctified, so much that we perhaps unconsciously withhold. There is that in our life which we are not ready to surrender to God to have sanctified. We are all more or less like the small boy who, saying his accustomed prayers, repeated this sentence, which stood in his book, "My God, I surrender all that I have to you," and then added on his own account, "except my little rabbit." How many of us have a "little rabbit," the possession of which spoils our peace! It is a little thing, so it seems, but the effect is great. You look out of a window where a splendid view is stretching before you, but if you hold a small object close to your eye you shut the view out. There will be no green meadows strewn with buttercups and daisies. There will be no purple hills in the far distance. There will be no clouds driving across the wind-swept sky. God is very great and very wonderful and

He is revealed to us in His providence and comes to be our guest in His sacrament, and when He goes would leave a blessing behind Him. But we can shut Him out with any small desire that we hold between our soul and Him. The lusts of the flesh may veil Him. The lusts of the eye may dim our vision so that we can no more see Him. The pride of life may blot Him from our sight. It need not be a very big thing. All that is needed is that you should hold it close. It is strange how we turn from God. It is still more strange that He doesn't turn from us.

"For surely He does not forsake the world,
But stands before it modeling in the clay
And moulding there His image. Age by age
The Clay wars with His fingers and pleads hard
For its old, heavy, dull and shapeless ease.¹

¹ Yeats, *Countess Cathleen*.

THE THIRTY-FIRST MEDITATION
THE CONSUMPTION OF THE SPECIES

When the celebrant has consumed what remains over of the Blessed Sacrament after giving communion to the people there comes a ceremony called the *Ablutions*. This is the cleansing of the chalice and the priest's fingers with wine and water. Then fingers, lips and chalice are dried with the purificator. Here again we have what at first was a mere necessary, practical detail acquiring a fixed and ceremonial form accompanied by appropriate prayers which the priest recites silently.

A curious misunderstanding in the early days of the Catholic revival has resulted in most Anglican clergy postponing the Ablutions till the end of the mass, instead of performing them, like all other Catholics, East and West, immediately after the communion. The Prayer Book has no directions whatever for any Ablutions. Those priests who conformed to the new order in the time of Edward VI and Elizabeth and who performed the Ablutions (as all who retained their Catholic belief surely would) undoubtedly did so at the point where they always had, immediately after the communion,—there being no new direction. Some time in Elizabeth's reign, owing to the inroad of Protestantism, this ceremony fell into disuse, apparently was forgotten, and was never revived until the days of the Oxford Movement. Protestant irreverence even went so far as sacrilegiously to treat what remained as mere bread and wine. To stop this the rubric "And if any . . . remain" was added in 1661. But this rubric ordered no Ablutions. Regarding the rubric the learned Bishop Cosin remarked that, if the celebrant be careful "*none will remain.*" When the taking of Ablutions was revived in the last century this rubric was mistakenly interpreted as fixing the ceremony at the end of the mass. The obvious facts are that, our book having no provision for any Ablutions, we should, if we revive the ceremony, place it where it was and is in the rest of the church, immediately after the communion.

Let us listen to the words of our Lord:

I am the Bread of Life.

Let us picture:

A CHRISTIAN in a Roman prison awaiting martyrdom. Out beyond the prison when next the doors swing open to let him pass—what will he meet? The stake? The headsman's block? The arena with the beasts? Perhaps from time to time through the window of his cell he hears the popular cry—the echo of some popular song; he may have heard it sung as his brethren went to death—*Christianos ad Leones!* Here he sits waiting, waiting the day of the popular festival when he will be taken out to amuse the multitude by his death. Where do his thoughts go, one wonders, during these days of waiting? We shall hardly be wrong in thinking that they go to that hidden place where the brethren meet in defiance of imperial edicts and at the risk of their lives, to celebrate the sacred Mysteries of their religion. He thinks of the little gathering in the midst of which a priest blesses bread and wine and distributes to all the Body and Blood of the Lord. His soul longs to be with them once more; he longs to be permitted once again to be partaker of that Food of the spirit which preserves body and soul to eternal life. And now it may be his dream, his longing is realised; the door opens, as it opened in time of persecution in many a Roman prison, and admits one, a priest, an acolyte, bearing wrapped close to his body

the vessel that contains the Bread of God. Picture the martyr falling down on the prison floor in adoration and thanksgiving. Picture his surpassing joy as he receives the Living Bread that came down from heaven. Food from off the heavenly altar, where angels adore the Crucified Lamb. The door closes again; the minister of God departs; but the martyr remains wrapped in the peace and joy of his communion. Strengthened by this Viaticum he is ready, the wheat of God, to be ground by the lion's teeth.

Consider, first,

How often the essentials of this scene have been reproduced in the life of the Church militant. In hospitals, in prisons, in tenements, in accidents, wherever there have been souls, who in their sore need have wanted our Lord to console and strengthen them, or to be with them in the hour of their death, there have come priests bearing the Sacred Body and Blood to strengthen and refresh them either for life or for death. This blessed ministry began in the earliest days of the Church's life and it has never since ceased. This is indeed the crowning privilege of the Church of God that her Incarnate Head is every ready at all times to minister his life for the needs of his members. "*Lo! I am with you always,*" he says; and he fulfils his saying in many ways. But in this way most marvellously for our comfort the Son abides forever, ever ready to give Himself to any hungry soul. In the days of the Church's persecution there were, no doubt, hidden places known to the faithful where the Body and Blood of Christ could always be found. There could be no open assembly of the faithful; such were strictly forbidden and watched for. The Blessed

Sacrifice could be offered only with the utmost secrecy. But when it was possible to offer it the sacred species would be reserved, and the initiate would resort thither and make their communions; from there too it would be borne to those who could not come. Consider this silent ministry of our Lord as His sacrament is borne unnoticed through the streets of heathen cities, as it comes into the house of the sick and dying, as it penetrates to the very prisons where are those about to die and is ministered to them as the very antidote of death—the bread which if a man eat he shall live forever. “O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men.”

Consider, second,

How manifold are the ways of approach unto Him that our Lord opens to us. “The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.” Very real is this Presence of God and revelation of His perfect beauty in the physical world. Do the majesty of the mountains and the wonders of the great deep, the beauty of dawn and twilight, the splendor of the noon-day, the mystery of the mid-night stir us to adoration? Surely, God is in all these. There are wonderful ways of God to be traced in our own personal history; surely, He has been about of path and about our bed and spied out all our ways: that to-day we know Him and love Him and worship Him is of the grace of His election. We have found Him too as we followed the path of our Fathers and learned of Him in the teaching and ministry of the Church; we have found a way of approach in the historic creeds and sacraments which are our inheritance from the past. There are intimate relations between our spirit and

His good Spirit whereby we have been taught of God and learned to recognise the inner voice wherewith He speaks to us. And there has been, it may be, this other path which we have learned to love which leads us to kneel before the Tabernacle and find in the silence of the church the sense of an immediate Presence which reaches forth from the altar and embraces us and draws us close to Him. We have found the help, the comfort, the consolation that we so often need here before the Hidden Presence of the Incarnate. Most dear is this every ready approach to our Redeemer; most wonderful this time of silent self-giving to the love of our Blessed Lord. If once we have found this path, surely we never forsake it, but it is evermore worn by our feet as we seek Him whom our soul loveth. How one comes to prize these moments of quiet meditation when we just kneel, asking nothing, but waiting for the voice to come. "Speak Lord, for thy servant heareth."

Let us, then, pray,

For perseverance in seeking our Lord, that we may both find Him and be found of Him.

O God, who in this wonderful sacrament hast left unto us a memorial of Thy Passion; grant us so to venerate the Sacred Mysteries of Thy Body and Blood that we may perceive within ourselves the fruits of Thy redemption; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

THE CONSUMPTION OF THE SPECIES

What remains of the Sacred Species after Communion has been consumed? The priest has said the last Gospel,

has genuflected and left the altar. The congregation has dispersed. The Church appears empty : but there remains still the Presence in the Tabernacle. There in the silence Incarnate God ceaselessly watches and offers Himself to the devotion of the faithful.

It is the heart of Christianity—the Presence of God. Wherever you turn in your study of what the Christian religion means you meet this fact—that it essentially means God with us. The coming of God in our nature, that is what the Incarnation means: God and man made one forever. The union of God with our souls—that is what baptism means ; a new creative act of God whereby we are translated from the natural to the supernatural order and made God's children and heirs. The Presence of God in our souls—that is what the Eucharist means, our strengthening and refreshing unto everlasting life by the transforming action of sanctifying grace. The continual Presence of God as an ever-ready help and refuge—that is what the Tabernacle means—God Incarnate offering Himself to us as our Mediator and Advocate, our door of approach to the Father. “God is in heaven and you should turn to Him there,” men say. If that is an objection to the Tabernacle it is also an objection to the Altar : ultimately it is an objection to Bethlehem and Calvary. God has come in the flesh. God has offered Himself in Bethlehem and on Calvary ; and He offers Himself on the Altar and in the Tabernacle, and we rejoice and are glad in the continual Presence of God.

Here, in the Church, is the continual revelation of the divine love. “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden”; this is the invitation that issues from the Tabernacle. “And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me”: that is the promise. Do you want to see the

fulfilment of this? Come into the Church and see the power of Incarnate God drawing souls to Himself. There is a man, obviously a poor man, who comes into the dusk of the church and falls on his knees without waiting to find his way to a seat: a man whose life has been hard labor—you can read that in his face. Now he is absorbed in prayer; you are confident that he has some pressing need that has brought him here to-day. He stays but a few moments, he flings himself on the love of our Lord, and then rises and goes back to his work. That little child—you had not noticed her come in—see her now at the chancel steps, looking up as she kneels as though she expected that the Tabernacle door would open and the Child of Bethlehem appear. Her face is all love and joy; she has no trouble to bring here, no sorrow to be assuaged. She is, perhaps, not saying anything at all, but just thinking of Jesus. Now she gets up from her knees and almost dances down the aisle and out into the light; and one is sure that glad eyes from the Tabernacle are following her as she goes.

Her place is taken by a woman who has just driven up in a motor. There is no touch of poverty here; also there is no radiancy of joy. She kneels quietly and, having looked for a moment at the Tabernacle, bows her head in her hands. So she remains absorbed: the moments pass and she moves not. It is a long silent communion with the hidden Presence. Has she so much to say to our Lord, or is she just lost in Him? Is it some great sorrow that is cast at His feet? Is it some struggle for light and guidance that is going on in her soul before the Tabernacle? Is it a spiritual battle that is being fought at the Altar foot—a shaken faith fighting for existence, a revolt of the soul that has to be quelled?

We do not know: the silent form kneels on, making no sign.

This goes on hour after hour, day after day through the passing years. Human beings whom Christ died to redeem, whom God wishes to sanctify, stream in and out, bringing their sorrows and their joys, to the Heart of the Silent One Who dwells above the Altar, silent to us who are looking on, but surely not silent to those who hear His invitation and come to Him for the help He has promised them. They surely hear a voice from the Altar, feel a Presence in the soul, and go away comforted. Here it is His constant mission to have mercy on them that fear Him; to exalt the humble and meek, and to fill the hungry with good things. Who would dare to interrupt his work? Who, having seen it, would dare remove the Presence to which the meek and hungry resort? Who would dare deny His people this access to their God?

It is the duty of the priest to provide for the spiritual needs of his people. It is a tremendous responsibility —this cure of souls. Hear the words that are spoken to the man who stands before the bishop, and in answer to his question, “Do you think in your heart, that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and according to the Canons of this Church, to the Order and Ministry of Priesthood?” answers, “I think it.” “We exhort you,” the bishop says, “In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye have in remembrance, into how high a Dignity, and to how weighty an Office and Charge ye are called: that is to say, to be Messengers, Watchmen, and Stewards of the Lord; to teach, and to premonish, to feed and provide for the Lord’s family; to seek for Christ’s sheep that are dis-

persed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ forever.

"Have always therefore printed in your remembrance, how great a treasure is committed to your charge. For they are the sheep of Christ, which He bought with His death, and for whom He shed His blood. The Church and Congregation whom you serve, is His Spouse, and His Body. And if it shall happen that the same Church or any member thereof, do take any hurt or hindrance by reason of your negligence, ye know the greatness of the fault, and also the horrible punishment that will ensue."

What a tremendous charge that is! Who that has heard these words addressed to him can fail to have them printed on his remembrance? As these words recur to him and he thinks how he is to fulfill them, he feels that he must do all that may be to prepare the spiritual aids which will minister to the development of the spiritual life of those committed to his charge. He is not charged with the administration of an amusement, but "to bring all such as are or shall be committed to your charge, unto that agreement in the faith and knowledge of God, and to that ripeness and perfectness of age in Christ, that there be no place left among you, either for error in religion, or for viciousness of life."

Therefore it is that the Catholic priest is concerned with the provision of such means as shall further the devotion of his people. This is his peculiar charge. It is not the charge of the bishop; it is the duty of him to whom the bishop has committed the cure of souls: the people of this special parish. The priest seeks therefore by what means this his so awful charge and responsibility

can be met. What is he to do to lead people to a deeper spiritual life?

If he is wise he remembers at the outset that he is not entering upon an untrodden path: multitudes have passed this way. Saintly priests have guided their people to perfectness of living. In answer to his anxious questioning as he stands on the threshold of his ministry, What shall I do for the spiritual health of my people? the answer is, Turn for guidance to the experience of the past. Do not be afraid to study the past. Do not for a moment imagine that the modern world is so separated from the past that it cannot learn from it. "A new world with new problems?" Yes: superficially: but the same human nature and the same spiritual needs. What the twentieth century needs is precisely what the first century needed—to find God. We are quite consumed with pride in the conviction that we are different from our ancestors, that we are intellectually daring and splendidly original. With all our daring we do not seem to have been intellectually original enough to have invented even a new sin. And when we get tired of the old sins, of those commonplace iniquities which are worn smooth by the use of thousands of generations, the same essential needs emerge and clamor for satisfaction. And the only thing that will satisfy them is what has satisfied all the Christian generations of penitents—the Cross and Blood of Jesus. What the modern world is blindly groping for is what was offered at the outset: "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

It is these age-long needs of a humanity struggling with sin and looking for guidance that the parish priest has to set himself to direct and satisfy. In his attempt

he brings out of the treasures of the Church that which has been approved by use. He looks to the Tabernacle as a means of spiritual help, and he finds that one application of it has approved itself in experience, that is, the making it the center of days of intercession. How helpful such days are in the life of a parish! How much it means in the way of spiritual energy released that all through the day prayer is made without ceasing. It recalls that primitive day of intercession when "prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God" for the imprisoned Peter and was so wonderfully answered in his miraculous release. Here on such a day some special purpose may be presented to our Lord, or the whole life and work of the parish may be presented for blessing and guidance. How can it fail to bring a blessing, this stream of prayer that ascends through all the hours of the day: and not only those special blessings that the day has for its object, those blessings which are formulated on the prayer-desk; but also added blessings in the deepening of the spiritual life of those who are engaged in prayer. Those who are interceding are Christians in a state of habitual grace; and one result, and not the least important, of their action, is one of which they are in all probability not thinking. They are engaged in the performance of a good work and one result of that is that they are meriting an increase of grace for themselves. They go out from the day's devotion stronger and purer because of the offering they have made to the glory of God and the advancement of His Kingdom here on earth. They have aided other souls; they have co-operated in the work of the day; they have themselves grown in grace and sanctity.

In the course of such days of intercession it is found

helpful in deepening devotion to set apart a time during which the Blessed Sacrament shall be exposed. We are merely using our knowledge of human psychology in so doing, knowing the intensified appeal that is made to our emotional nature by such a direct presentation of a spiritual fact. There is no reason why those who direct the devotions of the people should assume that they are all philosophers guided wholly by reason. Indeed I know of no ground for supposing that philosophers are so guided. The appeal to the emotional nature is a perfectly legitimate appeal in the interests of more intense devotion. What we are aiming to attain is a more vivid realisation of our Lord's actual presence in order that the worshipper may throw himself more completely, as we say, into his prayer. This "throwing oneself more completely" really means the more intense energising of the personality for the accomplishment of a given end. Personal energy is capable of degrees of expression like any other energy. In most of us it is apt to be sluggish and needs to be aroused and directed. A purely intellectual contemplation of the object will not do this; there is indeed a more vivid appeal than is thus made. It is, no doubt, possible, in the quiet of one's own room, to realize and act upon the Presence of God in such wise as to deepen one's spiritual experience; but we cannot deny that most of us at any rate will find devotional energy released in the quiet of a church more effectively than in one's room; and the appeal of the church is certainly heightened by the Incarnate Presence in the Tabernacle. And when the actual medium of the Presence, the veil of the Sacramental Species, is exposed we are still further stirred to response. Such an appeal is as legitimate as the appeal of music or ceremonial or oratory. I do not see that any

objection can be taken to it by anyone who believes in the Real Presence: with others I am not here concerned.

To those whose belief is not in some symbolical Presence but in the Presence of the Sacred Heart of Jesus beating behind the veil of the Host this privilege of kneeling here is inestimable. It is all gathered up in this: Jesus is here. I am in the very Presence and all my heart and all my desires I may lay open to Him. Or I need not—often it is better that I should not—try to pray at all, but rather try to forget myself and what seem my needs, giving myself to Him wholly in acts of love and adoration. To know Him is everlasting life, and how better learn to *know* than here where the Monstrance is the very throne of God? We may say, of course we do say, that the prayers which struggle against coldness and wandering thoughts from the very energy of will that we have to put forth may be more effective than the prayer that seems to find no obstacle to its expression, which seems to rise joyously from our hearts to God. Yet we do know that there is a joy in prayer, a consciousness of a released spirit, which is attainable when the conditions are favorable and which fills us with gladness in its expression. I do not know why we should not seek such help to self-expression: if our Lord wills to be present in the Sacrament, are we not to use that Presence as our spiritual aid?

Calm, sad, secure, behind high convent walls,
These watch the sacred lamp, these watch and pray:
And it is one with them when evening falls,
And one with them the cold return of day.

These heed not time; their nights and days they make
Into a long, returning rosary,

Whereon their lives are threaded for Christ's sake:
Meekness and vigilance and chastity.

A vowed patrol, in silent companies,
Life-long they keep before the living Christ:
In the dim church, their prayers and penances
Are fragrant incense to the Sacrificed.

Outside, the world is wild and passionate;
Man's weary laughter and his sick despair
Entreat at their impenetrable gate:
They heed no voices in their dream of prayer.

I think that when there are many in a parish who find it impossible to enter a day of intercession, there are few who cannot make use of the exposition as an aid in spiritual advance. They learn to come at the hours of our Lord's presentation with whatever of joy or sorrow or perplexity they have. They feel an increased confidence in our Lord under such conditions; they more and more learn to make use of Him, as He would have them. He becomes to them in a new way *their God*. It is something of this that the Israelites found in the Presence within the veil of the Temple, and because the experience was essentially the same—the experience of a present God—we find it natural to use the words that come to us across the centuries. The Psalter is the most modern book of the Old Testament because it is the most timeless. The experience of God belongs to no age and is independent of time and circumstance. Still we can express our joy as they did: "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house; the place where thy honor dwelleth." We can find there our happiness and "be glad when they say unto us, let us go into the house of the Lord." We

feel when we are there that the great reward of life is the divine Presence, "that we may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of our life." That, we know, is what heaven will be. And if it be sorrow or perplexity that is our lot to-day, if we are in conflict with the mysteries of life, it is when we come into the house of the Lord that we understand. As for Job the revelation of the reality of God was the answer to all his questioning; so for us the passing from the turmoil of the streets of the city into the peace of the sanctuary is the passing from the disquietude of this world to the rest of God.

There is added the formality and stateliness of worship when we pass from the simplicity and quiet of exposition to the majesty and glory of benediction. Again, I have no intention or disposition to deal with the objections which are taken to this service. One understands that if there be no belief in the Real Presence such a service is impossible. One understands that if we Anglicans are an isolated sect confined in our practice to what has been done in England since the Reformation, such a service has no place. But if I am right in thinking of myself as a Catholic Christian (and I must do that if I take the utterances of the Church to which I belong seriously) I find the life and practice of the Catholic Church in all ages open to me. The very fact that the Anglican Communion has not legislated on a given subject so far from binding me leaves me free. It leaves the priest free, as I have said above, to provide for the spiritual needs of his people as seems to him to be right and helpful. Feeling the awful pressure of his ordination promises he cannot be content until he has availed himself of all helpful means for the edification of the flock committed to him.

There is no more beautiful service than benediction, none that more directly brings home to one the actual presence of God. In the midst of the altar lights the monstrance stands enshrining the Presence—the Presence of Incarnate God. The words and music of the *O Salutaris Hostia* carry the adoration of the congregation, of these men and women who are the Body of Christ in this place, to the Head of the Body. There is a wonderful sense of unity here, the unity of the One Family, the unity of the Head and members. Our Lord is not now looking down upon a mixed multitude as He did from the Cross; He is not looking into the faces of those who hate Him or are indifferent to Him; rather He is here as when He gathered His faithful followers about Him in the sacred communion of His friendship, as when in the Upper Chamber He fed them, as when after the Resurrection he appeared to them through the locked doors and brought to them the blessing of His peace. Here again He is saying, "My peace I give unto you"; here once more He is reassuring the hesitant and doubtful: "Let not your heart be troubled, neither be afraid." How close we seem to Him and how close to one another! One family in Christ, that is it, one Body through which the Incarnate Life circulates. No isolation, no separation; all the barriers are down. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, we are all one in Christ Jesus."

O Salutaris hostia,
Quæ cœli pandis ostium,
Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer auxilium.

Uni trinoque Domino
Sit sempiterna gloria,

Qui vitam sine termino
Nobis donet in patria.

In patria—in our true home; that is where we find ourselves. It will be but a step further to see the veil removed. To have our eyes opened to the spiritual fact of which the Altar is a symbol; to have our ears opened to the song of Moses and the Lamb! There is so little between that now we almost break through to heaven. One does not at all wonder at the stories with which the lives of the saints are filled of the actual appearance of our Lord upon the Altar. One understands the intensity of spiritual vision which actually sees what it knows to be there, which is enabled to transcend the symbol and reach the Reality of which the symbol is the vehicle. That spiritual intensity which can perceive the object of its faith is not granted to most of us, but if we lack the vision we do not lack the faith.

Nor do we miss the joy. The music dies away; the incense clouds drift silently about the monstrance; silence fills the church, and our whole souls go out in an act of adoration and communion. It is not, perhaps, that we are praying, that is, offering petitions: no, we are offering ourselves. We, the members, are *using* the fact of our membership in an act of self-surrender to our Head. How we value the opportunity of the brief silence! Presently we shall go on with the service, there will be other hymns, and then there will be the Benediction itself, the veritable, visible Benediction of Jesus our Lord. As the priest holds Him over us we look up at Him and open our souls to the coming of His grace. And then what joy of worship as the voices join in the Divine Praises: “Blessed be God, blessed be His Holy Name,

blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true man." As one goes out into the street one feels that there has been a wonderful event in which it has been one's high privilege to share. Jesus has once more manifested Himself among men and we have been permitted to see His glory, and our faith has been vivified and strengthened by the vision we have seen.

How distinct is the feeling of the church wherein the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. This is more obvious to one than to another. I suppose that there is such a thing as spiritual sensitivity, a power of the perception of spiritual facts. I do not know why we should doubt that. We are sensitive to the beauty of form, of color, of sound, in quite different degrees; and are not these ultimately spiritual facts? Why then should we not expect a varying sensitiveness to the spiritual realities which surround us? And as we can be educated to a true appreciation of beauty in the world about us, is it not to be expected that spiritual education will be possible, that we can be trained to the perception of spiritual things? That, in fact, is what does take place. The vision of the saint is not due to the fact that the saint is by constitution of greater spiritual sensitivity than others, but that his training has developed in him this quality of spiritual awareness, just as the training of the musician develops in him the capacity for enjoying the beauty of the symphony where the untrained soul finds nothing that it can grasp or understand.

It would be stupid for a man to assert that a sonata means nothing because it means nothing to him. A fact that I cannot use may nevertheless be an enormously valuable fact. One's only intelligent attitude in the presence of it is that of one who would willingly learn to use it.

And that is our only intelligent attitude in the face of spiritual fact. Those spiritual facts which are attested by the experience of the saints may not be pushed aside and ignored by us because we can see no meaning in them. They are challenges to us, revelations of our present imperfect spiritual attainments, revealing also our, perhaps, hitherto unsuspected possibilities in the way of spiritual growth. The friend who stands on the hill-top waving his hand to us challenges us to climb, and the reward of our climbing is the vision of beauty which is revealed from the conquered height. There are spiritual heights to conquer and from them the Vision of God is revealed. Can we be satisfied with the uninspired and unadventurous life of the foot-hills?

For what thou seest, man,
That, too, become thou must;
God, if thou seest God;
Dust, if thou seest Dust.

In the Tabernacle our Lord watches and waits, offering Himself still to the multiform needs of man. As on earth He was ever ready to answer men's calls; as He follows Jairus to his sick child yet is easily stopped on the way by the woman with the issue of blood, so now there is the same readiness for the service of His children. Here He abides day and night in the Tabernacle ready to go out upon miracles of mercy. Here at any hour the priest comes and bears Jesus out to the sick and the dying. In the crowded life of a parish how much that means—that Jesus is ready! The telephone rings in the dead of night and a voice from the hospital asks for Him. There is a knock at the door and a voice pleads, "My little

daughter lieth at the point of death: I pray Thee, come and lay Thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live." And Jesus goes out into the night on His errand of mercy. He brings healing to the body of the sick child, He brings peace to the soul of the dying man. We read our Bible and look back at Palestine where Jesus went about the cities and villages on His errands of mercy. How wonderful it is to think that those miracles of mercy have never ceased; that through all the centuries since His Ascension He has still been going about on the same merciful work bringing healing to the bodies and peace to the souls of His children.

The Watcher in the Tabernacle sees the whole panorama of human life in its varied joys and sorrows pass before Him. To-day He sees a child brought and it is made one with Him at the font. To-morrow it may be a children's Guild kneeling before Him and singing the litany of the Blessed Sacrament. Now it is a wedding that He is asked to bless; again it is a body brought in and set before Him. Have you ever tried to think out what that last means—what that night in the darkness and silence of the church is, when the body of the dead rests in the presence of Jesus shrined in the Tabernacle? The soul is not there, only the body? In a sense the soul is here because Incarnate God is here and the soul is in the presence of God. One thinks of that night as a night of mystic intercourse, of the soul now understanding at once its failure and its success, rejoicing in that it has reached the haven of safety though suffering from the pain of self-realisation, the vision of itself as it is in the sight of God. Amid all its wreckage and loss the saved soul feels that it has gained the one great prize—it has not lost Jesus. The glory of the Beatific Vision

lies far off across the years of purification; but in all the pain of those years there will be the consolation and help of the Saviour. We picture the watch over the body of the dead as one stage in the purification of life.

There are some, one learns, who feel that this practice of the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament is an unjustifiable exposure of our Lord to neglect if not to insult. "There are so many people who do not understand," they say. "They will not in any way acknowledge the Presence, indeed, act as though It were not there. And there are so many people who do not believe; ought you not to prepare people before the Reservation is introduced?" No doubt the instinct that prompts such utterances is a good and pious one; but it is hardly a practical one. There are certain things which people who are unused to can only be prepared for by the presence of. They cannot well be prepared in their absence to understand and use them. You cannot prepare a congregation long used to Matins for the worship of the Mass in any other way than by the Mass itself. You can explain to them certain truths, you can suggest certain actions, but the inner fact of worship is only learned by worship. It is the same with reservation and the services and practices which grow out of it. They are appreciated not by theoretical understanding, but by actual use. Often a theoretical objection to benediction or exposition is abolished by a single experience.

Moreover this plea for the avoidance of irreverence disregards God's usual method. No doubt one would do all that one can to avoid any irreverence; but often that which seems so to the instructed Catholic is not intentionally such. The uninstructed person who does not genuflect before the Blessed Sacrament is not irreverent

by any necessity; and it is never God's method to avoid irreverence. Our Lord quite simply subjected Himself to the irreverent treatment of human crowds. He did not hide Himself in the wilderness or surround Himself with but a chosen few: He went into the crowded places of human life that all men might see and know Him. He wanted to be known and therefore He preached in public places and never complained of the enmity and irreverence and misunderstanding of the crowds to whom He preached. He did not take the Pharisaic attitude of aloofness from the people, but associated familiarly with publicans and sinners. He wanted to be intimate with humanity in all its phases and experiences in order that He might heal it. In short we may say that the Incarnation itself was the voluntary exposure of God Himself to human conditions that He might break down the barriers which existed between man and Himself. Men could not believe Him till they saw Him and knew Him, till He had revealed Himself to them as He really is. In the pursuit of that end He shrank from no insult: "He hid not his face from shame and spitting."

I feel that we are right to approach this practice of the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament from the same point of view. It is a deliberate attempt to make men understand God's attitude toward them; to make them feel that He is not a distant presence in a far-off heaven, not an unintelligible mystery of divinity; but that as He came into the world to seek and to save the lost, to fill the hungry and to lift the lowly, so He is still here upon the same mission. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Under whatever change of condition the work of man's rescue goes on. It is fatal to the intelligible presentation of that work to bring it before men as the

work of an organisation representing One Who has Himself left the world, turning over the prosecution of the work of world-conversion to representatives. The work to be intelligible must be presented as still His personal work—work which He Himself is carrying on. The human organisation is not representative of an absent power, but the instrument of One present. “Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

We must present to men a Jesus who is present, not simply as a memory and therefore as an example, nor as a spiritual power, but a Jesus Who is personally present and active in the life of the Church. We are assuming all along a belief in the Catholic doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament; if that belief is well founded then we cannot do better than to follow the line of Catholic experience in the use of the Sacrament as a mode of Christ’s presence and action among us. We believe that He wills to be among men and that He will to work among them effectively by His sacramental presence. The priest is purely an agent, an instrument in God’s hands, for the fulfilment of His purposes. It is the duty of the priest to see that our Lord has an opportunity to work. The priest can do nothing more than that—offer himself as the instrument and cooperator of the work of God among men. Believing with all his soul in the Incarnate Presence in the Blessed Sacrament, he believes in the converting and regenerating and purifying power of that Presence wherever it can be brought into contact with human souls. He, the priest, can explain and teach; he can plant and water, but it is God alone Who giveth the increase. It is his indestructible confidence in the power of the divine Presence over the souls of men that compels him to bring men to that presence and to lead them by all the means

in his power to a clear understanding of its meaning. To-day, still the multitude are as sheep having no shepherd, whose innermost need is that they shall see Jesus; and though they know not that need the priest knows it, and to bring them to Jesus the priest brings Jesus to them.

Blessed be Jesus Christ on His throne of glory, in the Sacrament of the altar and in the hearts of His people.

THE THIRTY-SECOND MEDITATION
THE EUCHARISTIC LIFE

The last act which the celebrant performs before leaving the altar is to go to the gospel corner and read the *Last Gospel*. This is usually the beginning of the Gospel according to S. John, as far as verse fourteen. But at the Christmas Mass, which uses this as the gospel for the day, the gospel for the Epiphany is used for the *Last Gospel*. When a saint's feast is kept on a Sunday, the gospel of the Sunday is used for the *Last Gospel*, and the arrangement is similar when a feast displaces one of the greater ferias. The *Last Gospel* is a very late addition to the Mass. In fact it is really hardly a part of the Mass at all, but rather a part of the celebrant's thanksgiving. Formerly it was said as he walked back to the sacristy, as is still done when a bishop is the celebrant.

Let us listen to the Words of our Lord:

By their fruits ye shall know them.

Let us picture:

H CONGREGATION leaving church after early communion. They come out into the full light of the winter morning and go their several ways to their homes. The gathering of the Christian Brotherhood to meet and receive their Lord is over, and they are carrying away with them—what experiences, what memories? What strange things we should meet if we could look into the minds and thoughts of all of them: the priest who is folding away his vestments in the sacristy; the server who is hurriedly putting out the lights on the altar; the men and women who hurry along the snow-covered street. What sort of lessons should we learn from such an experience? Perhaps they are not very far to seek; we can learn many of them, can we not? by a glance into our own souls. Perhaps we might sum up a large measure of the mind of these men and women and children if we were to say that they were hurrying back to the world. For a short half-hour they have been in the church striving to direct and control their thoughts in worship and communion; now they pass from the atmosphere created by the sacrificial worship back to the accustomed atmosphere of daily life. The thoughts, the occupations, the cares of the ordinary day come back—and it is indeed the light of common day. Two men who have just made their com-

munions meet and go on together, and if we could overhear them their talk would be of quite ordinary matters—affairs of trivial interest. That woman who is hurrying so fast is evidently feeling that she is a little late, and has interfered with the routine of the family. The children gather and slide on the ice in the roadside ditch with a return of noisy gaiety after the moments of suppression. What are we to make of it all? Is it an expression of reaction after enforced strain? Or are we to think it a quite proper and natural passage from one of life's activities to another?

Consider, first,

That on the whole it is quite what we should expect from a contemplation of God's ordinary dealings with man. God comes to men as they are, in order that He may lift them to be what He wants them to be. God does not wait for men to grow to him by some unintelligible process, but He Himself comes into the common life of humanity, mingles with it, takes His part in it, teaches it to be simple, clean, loving. To Him there is no common or unclean, and therefore to Him there is nothing separate from religion. Our separations are merely formal. The boy hurriedly putting out the lights on the altar in order that he may get out and join his friends on the ice is not an example of triviality and perfunctory religion; he is just a human child with manifold interests in his life. He is not forgetting our Lord to rush into unspirituality. Our Lord who came to him at the altar goes out with him into the joy of the sunlight, the sting of the keen air which sets his blood rushing through his veins, the rapture of quick movement as he slides across the ice. The woman anxious about her

household, the men chatting about quite ordinary affairs, are not mere unfeeling, uncomprehending people because they are not thinking or talking about sacramental experiences; they are merely passing from one of life's experiences to another. God came to them; but also He is going out with them, and by His abiding presence in their souls is trying to win the mastery of them so as to change all their life to an expression of His presence. God is not present in prayer and worship merely; He is present in human life, influencing it that it may be *all worship*—all offering to Him. He is present still, in the calm of the men, in the care of the woman, in the joy of the child. Unless He can master *these* He cannot master life, and fails in His work of sanctification. Unless God can express Himself through the ordinary things of life, the daily common-place things, His expression through religious observances will be of no avail. We must be sanctified wholly—body, soul, spirit—or not at all.

Consider, second,

That the progress of our sanctification, indeed, will be known by the God-ward look of our *whole* life—by its being expressive of the service of God in its entirety. The total output of life will be an index of the inner nature of life—*by their fruits ye shall know them*. The eucharistic life is not the sum of our hours spent in church, or the totality of our thoughts and acts termed spiritual; it is the life lived out of church, in the open, so to say, where the effects of our approach to God and His approach to us may be estimated in terms of human acts and relations. Our lives are indeed a parallelogram of forces where the diverse influences we experience have a resultant movement which tells the story of our inner

struggles—our victories and defeats. They are the battlefield where the Spirit of God contends with many other spirits for ultimate control. We feel the struggle in the strain of a will drawn this way and that by contending motives, and we are able to estimate the success or failure of God by the direction of our movement. The reality of our religion must constantly be judged by what it accomplishes, by its control of the other factors of life. We have to learn the often-times bitter lesson that we must be judged, not by our feelings or impulses or momentary aspirations, but by the actual fruit we bring forth. It is a mode of judgment that shatters many an illusion; but it is so plain that we can make no mistake about it. If we have brought our gift to the altar—the gift of a surrendered life—and have taken God's gift from the altar—the gift of His personal Presence in our souls—then we shall go out to live a fruitful life wherein the Holy Spirit brings to maturity all His manifold gifts of grace. And our possession of God will be evidenced in quite ordinary ways—by pure joy in His gift of life, by loving intercourse with our brethren, by careful performance of daily work: for they who are wholly sanctified will give evidence of their sanctity in every mode of their activity.

Let us, then, pray,

That our whole lives may be evidence of our intimate relation with our Lord. Pray, that you may bring forth the fruits of righteousness; that you may *have your fruit unto sanctification, and the end everlasting life.*

O Lord God, King of heaven and earth, may it please Thee this day and ever to order and to hallow, to rule and to govern, our heats and our bodies, our thoughts,

our words and our works, according to Thy commandments, that we, being helped by Thee, may here and forever be delivered and saved; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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THE EUCHARISTIC LIFE

"He that eateth me, even he shall live by me," said our Lord. The life that the Christian lives is a supernatural life fed by the Eucharist. I want in this final meditation to sum up something of what I have been trying to make clear in regard to the spiritual life itself.

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." And unfortunately the Christian, who is the spiritual man, often tends to treat life from the naturalistic standpoint. He remains in bondage under the rudiments of this world. The life of most men in this world is an absolute slavery. It is not that they are obliged to work for their living—that is wholly good; but that they give themselves utterly to the world and have no place of refuge from it. Influence, position, money, pleasure, whatever it is that they are seeking, lays hold upon them and masters them. What man in middle life to-day has any real freedom, is more than a cog in a machine, sold into bondage from which he cannot escape? "He does not want to escape," you say; "he loves it and would be unhappy without it." Possibly; but that only emphasises the helplessness of his state. His life is identified with that which is demonstrably temporal and passing; and if so be that there is in him that which is not temporal and passing, what pos-

sibly can be its fate in an environment with which it has failed to make contact?

And in all of us, whatever our theory about life, there remains a large infusion of the world. It is not only the natural and necessary setting of our life; but there is much in it to which we have in the strict sense of the word become attached. We are held by this habit; we are bound by that association; we are chained by fashion and fastened by custom. Here and there we have broken away; there are aspirations, desires, ideals; but as a whole life is not free. At times a vision of our possibilities comes over us, and realising our state we cry out with St. Paul, "Who shall deliver me from this body of death?" but we do not always find his solution: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord."

The first practical step in Christian endeavor is when, under the impulse of the grace of God, one feels the supreme importance of the Christian religion, and sets oneself to the acquisition of a Christian character. Then the primary choice has to be made—God or Mammon? Then one understands that to advance at all the myriad tentacles by which we are held to the world have to be broken, that life has to be freed from its slavery to the world and acquire a new orientation. Many, catching a glimpse of this necessity, seeing as through mists the straight and narrow way mounting Calvary, find in themselves no spiritual ambition and turn their backs on the mountain where the Cross is revealed: go on as they were going down the slope of the Way that is broad and leadeth to destruction. Such an one comforts himself with the thought that there be "many who go in thereat." One cannot be far wrong if one follows the crowd.

But if the voice is compelling, if the spirit is aroused,

if the beauty and purity of the possible life lay hold on one, what is one to do to escape? How is one to break away? Is it not better, that is, more practical, to add to the life one is now leading certain elements which shall represent the religion that one recognises as desirable? "To give up the world" has, after all, rather a mediæval sound; it does not mean much in the life of to-day. It is an echo of an abandoned ascetic theory of life—a theory which drew hard and fast lines where there was no need of any lines at all. To-day, religion means the support of an institution, the general intention of "leading a good life," the supporting works which are directed to the reformation of the people. But to accept rules, to think beliefs important, to "give up the world" in the sense of denying oneself any of its pleasures and luxuries, not to say the comforts which one's worldly situation has put within one's reach, is absurd. Why should God want a man to be uncomfortable?

So the suggestion of an ascetic principle, of the need of detachment, is waved aside, and, curiously, waved aside by the very men who in the sphere of life with which they are familiar, have found detachment absolutely essential—or so they tell you. How has this successful and wealthy man with whom you are talking over his career, accumulated his wealth? He will proudly tell you. He was a poor boy; he had no one to help him at the start, he says. He was thrown on his own resources. When he went to work at the age of fourteen he received three dollars a week. Often he had hardly enough to eat. He was unable to enter into the pleasures of other boys of his age. He wanted to get on; and he knew that if he spent time and money as other boys did he should never win his end. You know the story of his progress till

the day when he sits here in his luxurious office telling you of the hardness and discipline he endured to attain success. Or it is a man who sits opposite you at dinner at a club, a distinguished scientist, a specialist of some sort. How did he attain his position, you ask? It was, you learn, very simple: by concentration, by discipline, by pushing aside anything, no matter how entertaining, no matter how desirable in itself, which did not make for the end in view. Perhaps he grows expansive over his cigar. There is only one way to success, he tells you—utter devotion to the end you have chosen. "There is X.," he goes on, "who was in my class in college; a brilliant fellow of whom great things were prophesied. Where is he to-day? A clerk in a government office. Why? Because he loved pleasure too much, because he could not deny himself society, because he thought you could have it both ways—and you can't."

Ah! No: you can't. When you turn to another sphere of success and question the man who has arrived he tells you the same story. From the vantage point of his achieved sanctity the saint grows communicative and tells you his secret. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course." It is essentially the same story that the business man tells or the eminent scientist: the story of singleness of purpose, of sustained effort, of discipline, of the elimination of the irrelevant. It is the story of the man who puts first things first.

If you want a thing bad enough
To go out and fight for it,
Work day and night for it,
Give up your time and your peace and your sleep for it,
If only desire of it
Makes you quite mad enough

Never to tire of it,
Makes you hold all other things tawdry and cheap for it.

If neither cold, poverty famished and gaunt,
Nor sickness nor pain,
Of body and brain,
Can turn you away from the thing you want,—
If dogged and grim you besiege and beset it—
 You'll get it.

"Is it then impossible that a man should be a successful business man or a great scientist, and a saint? Are the two vocations mutually exclusive?" Not at all. The career of the business man or of the scientist can be carried on in a spirit of exclusive devotion to business or science as ends in themselves; or they can be carried on as ends which are subordinate to a wider life-purpose,—the glory of God. The law of the Christian life is, "glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's," and "do all to the glory of God." Success in the spiritual life is success in putting God first and making His glory and service our ends. The raw material of life may be manipulated to secondary ends, needs must be so manipulated, while the whole life is so lived as to be an offering to God. But to be so lived it must exclude that which is unrelated to God, that which cannot be consecrated to His service. To live an ascetic life means this discipline of exclusion and refusal, means the elimination of all that hinders spiritual progress, the negation of all that antagonises it. There seems to be no reason for calling such a conception of life mediæval or outworn. The business man on Monday afternoon looks out of his window and sees the sunshine, and dreams of the beauty of the golf course or the trout stream, and shakes his

head and returns to his *desk*; if he is a Christian he may have the same dream on Sunday morning, but now he shakes his head and goes to Mass.

The Christian will not only be able but will be glad to turn his back on possibilities of pleasure or of gain in favor of spiritual enrichment, if his detachment has passed beyond voluntary self-denial to that inner detachment of the spirit which makes possible the enjoyment of spiritual riches. So far as our detachment is a matter of law and will it requires a constant effort and is open to constant questioning. It is only after we have found the spiritual riches that self-denial becomes spontaneous and glad because it is so obviously the road to spiritual achievement. It has no value in itself any more than the business man's detachment from the game of golf is in itself valuable; but it is valuable as means to an end, it clears the way for the exercise of the spiritual powers. It is part of the adjustment of life to chosen ends.

Let us then look at the spiritual life as a positive achievement for which we clear the way by ascetic practice. The spiritual life is that life which is initiated in our baptism when the baptised person is regenerated and made a partaker of the divine nature. The *newness* of the life is such that the person baptised can now be spoken of as a "new creation," the resultant of a supernatural act of God. By virtue of his participation in the divine nature the reborn person is now in union with God, and is said to be in a justified state, in a state of sanctifying or habitual grace. In the New Testament this state is variously depicted. It is said of the Christian that his "life is hid with Christ in God"; that "he who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." This life which is imparted in baptism is sustained prin-

cipally by the Holy Communion of which our Lord says: "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me": and again, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life."

This is the state in which those who receive baptism have been placed. The question which the adult Christian has to-day to consider is whether he has continued in that state or has departed from it; whether, that is to say, he is living in a state of mortal sin or in a state of sanctifying grace? In many cases there seems to be a kind of intermediate state which theory makes no place for, but which is a fact of observation. This is a case of what I venture to call dormant grace. A man in this state is not deliberately and consciously doing wrong; indeed, he will tell you that he is doing the best he knows, which is often the fact. But he has never conceived life as a set of spiritual values: what he calls his religion has never got beyond natural moral values. He is honest, upright, generous, but he is not supernatural. Perhaps we may say, crudely, that his attention has never been called to the fact that he is a supernatural being with supernatural relations *now*. In a vague way he expects to have supernatural relations in the future, in heaven, after death; but now he understands his relation to God to be one of "goodness," that is, of obedience to the moral law as he understands it; any obligation beyond that is represented by a more or less intelligent support of the church as a useful organisation to which he has come to belong.

There is no need, I suppose, of thinking of such men as in a state of mortal sin. Any one who has become familiar with the type through their first confessions after conversion will testify that they were spiritual babes.

Except for a few prayers and an occasional communion, their lives had been a spiritual blank. They are what they are represented to be—"good men," with the natural virtues well developed, but spiritually both childlike and childish.

Nothing can arouse a man to spiritual relations, save the grace of God. Given that awakening, what steps is a man to take? He needs to realise that God is his Father and to approach Him in fervent prayer. He needs to realise that Jesus is his Saviour Who wants to communicate Himself to him in the sacraments. He needs to realise that the Holy Spirit is a guide Who will lead him in the way of sanctity.

Prayer is the foundation of the Christian experience. It is the evidence that a man has discovered God. Many men say that they believe in God when they only mean that they would not deny that God exists: but they have never discovered that God is a Person on Whom they are dependent, that He is not only responsible (in some vague way) for their existence, but that they depend upon Him and are responsible to Him from day to day. The discovery that we are the children of God is the discovery of privileges and responsibilities which can only be attained or satisfied by personal acts on our part, such acts as can, broadly, be called prayer. Prayer is more than the acknowledgment of God; it is the expression of our love of Him and our dependence upon Him. In its simplest form it is the attitude of the child taking its life to its father; it is the instinctive attitude of approach. "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

But such a prayer is only the starting-point of our spiritual development. To grow in grace means to grow in

prayer, which does not so much mean spending more time in prayer as spending more intelligence in prayer. The intercourse of the child with the Father speedily grows beyond the stage of mere asking for favors of some sort. As the child grows in maturity he grows in understanding of his father and finds in that understanding and the love that accompanies it his true basis of communion. He does not now so much want things as want that personal intercourse which is the interchange of love. In prayer we gain this when we learn to make prayer a means of understanding and approach, that is, when we emphasise the elements of meditation and contemplation in the possibilities of which prayer is so rich. They call out the activities of our spiritual powers as the prayer of petition does not and by the exercise they are strengthened to become organs of knowledge. We know of God through the teaching of the Church under whose guidance we are; we come to know God as Father and Friend when, submitting ourselves to that guidance, we become skillful in prayer. God is no longer power but Person: and no longer a distant and unknown Person, but Father and Friend. "The Father Himself loveth you"—that is the truth we find.

The Father, then, does not remain unknown but more and more reveals Himself to us. And especially do we find Him revealed in His Son. In Him we find the Father perfectly revealed. "No one knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him.": it is in Him that we come to understand what God is, and His character and His attitude toward us. Without the Son we should not think of Him as in any deep sense the Father, but rather as Creator and Ruler. But the Son presents Himself as the Interpreter. As

such He brings us the gift which proves the medium of understanding, the gift of a common life. "I give unto them eternal life." "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

Jesus then is the way of approach to the Father. It is through His humanity that we have access to God. His work broke down the barrier that separated us from God and made clear the way of approach. When now we think of Him as our Mediator we are thinking of that sacrifice of His which He offered upon the Cross for the sins of all the world, and the merits of which He pleads before the Father, and by the application of which to ourselves we are made fit for the Presence of God.

It is this saving work of our Lord that we rely on to make us worthy of our divine sonship. It is the will of God that all men shall come to the knowledge of God and be saved. We have come to the knowledge of the truth and are saved now; that is, we are in a state of salvation, unless we have defeated the operation of the grace of God. God wills that every man shall be saved; but any man may defeat that will by refusing to be saved. If we are free to choose God we are also free to reject Him: if the door of heaven has been set open by our Lord, we can close it to ourselves. God calls, and our Lord offers, and if we will we can accept and be saved.

And being saved means, for us who know, at least, the life of grace, of sanctification: means that we are not passive in God's hands, but active in the work of grace. There is not only an operation in the spiritual life but a cooperation. You are to work "out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God that

worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure." That is the law of the spiritual life: rely on God as though He were doing everything; act as though you had to do all.

There are two sides or aspects to the life of the spirit. By one side it is a life of grace, of God's work in us; we may perhaps call it, from the importance of the Blessed Sacrament in it, a eucharistic life. It centers in our constant communion with God at the altar. Here our Lord fulfills His words: "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me." The life that we enter upon at our baptism is here built up into ever-increasing strength. After we have been faithful communicants for a time sin becomes a very different thing to us. There is that terrible thing—a spiritual shipwreck, but very very rarely does it overtake a sincere communicant. With our growth in grace we grow in horror of sin: and not simply in horror of it; we grow away from it. We find that temptations which once appealed to us have lost their attractiveness, that we have passed out of the sphere of their influence. Our spiritual character is strengthened, the muscles of it are becoming tense and elastic; we throw off the appeal of evil without conscious effort. How can it be otherwise if we are assimilating grace? Day by day the soul is filled with the presence of God; we become living tabernacles where God Incarnate dwells, and when He goes He leaves a blessing behind Him, leaves our souls the stronger by an increase of grace. And in the "strength of this bread" we go out to face the day's work and because of this grace the day's work is transformed. It is no longer a mere piece of materialism set apart from all contact or concern with the spirit, but the work in home or school, shop or office

becomes itself a spiritual thing because it is the work of one the foundation of whose life is consciously spiritual. We have found the solution of our problem; we have bridged the gulf between matter and spirit; we have found that it is the man that gives character to his work. The man's work is what the man is, and the man being spiritual spiritualises all the work that he does. It is true, is it not? that as we look back over some years of eucharistic experience we can see that our lives have been transformed, that we have attained a strength which does not shrink from being tried, that we have gained a self-confidence which, when we analyse it, turns out to be, not a confidence in self at all but in God. We do not offer ourselves rashly to temptation, but we do not fear it.

That is one side of the life of the spirit, its dependence on grace, especially the grace of the altar. The other side appears when we think of life as active service, as a life not of dreams but of work. And this brings us to think of the spiritual life as essentially an expression of the Spirit of God who dwelleth in us. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

As long as we are in a state of grace we are indwelt by God, and it is noted as the disaster of mortal sin that it grieves the Spirit whereby we were sealed unto the day of redemption. It is better to say that our life is the expression of a Person than of a power. We are not acted upon from a distance by a divine force but are transformed from within by a divine Person. The third Person of the Blessed Trinity is our intimate friend and ally. Whatever of good is wrought in us He works, whatever response to grace we make is a response to Him

and made with His aid. All our virtues are His creation. The word virtue means strength to accomplish, and this strength is the strength of the Spirit. That takes from us all responsibility? Not at all: our responsibility remains complete—a responsibility to will what the Spirit wills, and to accept and love all that He suggests to us.

It is under His guidance, prompted by Him that we do good works. A good and meritorious work is one done by a person in a state of grace and with the aid of grace. Good works are the rich fruitage of those who live in union with God. The sentence on man in a state of sin was that he should find all work labor: the privilege of man in a state of grace is that he shall find in the work of God the fulness of joy. The grace of God which is poured into the souls of the saints is out-poured in works which show forth the glory of God. And in us who are not in the full sense saints, yet because we are saints in a true sense, children of God and friends, the same grace has its proportionate results. It brings forth fruit, and the characteristic of the fruit of grace is that it is permanent. The wages, that is the fruit, of sin, is death; the outcome is spiritual disaster. But those whom God has chosen, appointed, He has appointed that they should bring forth fruit and that their fruit should remain: having become the servants of God we "have our fruit unto sanctification, and the end eternal life."

As therefore we do the works of grace we are not constantly haunted by the thought that after all they have no permanency, that they are as the chaff which the wind scatters, that a few years shall pass and we shall see them no more and all that we have done will be forgotten. There is nothing more pathetic than the struggle

of the natural man to make his work permanent, to secure a place in the memory of his successors. We have not to be so haunted. Our work of faith and labor of love will not perish because it is a treasure laid up in the heavens for us. There all that we have done with the help of God's grace awaits us to be ours permanently and to be the basis of our reward on the Day of Judgment. What we now sow we shall then reap, the works that we do now will have their reward then. That is the abiding quality of a good work which gives it its fascination. We smile at the man who builds a monument to perpetuate his memory for we know that the monument will perish and the man be forgotten; but we know that the prayers that we say for the man's soul, the alms that we give in his memory, will not be forgotten but will be a treasure that we shall find laid up for us in that last great day.

One of the greatest aids that we find in the way of spiritual development is the fellowship of those who have gone by the way before us. The early stages of the Christian life are apt to be troubled by loneliness. We have broken away from our accustomed associations, it may be, and have not yet discovered companionship and sympathy on the way. Many people, especially the young, complain of the isolation in which they find themselves if they draw the strict moral line that the practice of Christianity requires in social life. As we grow older and become accustomed to the situation we feel it less, but the sense of separation is there. There is nowhere a Christian society with which we can identify ourselves but only individual Christians. The attempts of the Church to develop a social life have never been successful; perhaps it is impossible that they should be. No doubt

Christians ought to help and support one another more than they do; yet if they are indeed the salt of the earth, its saving element, they cannot be wholly isolated from the world but must preserve some sort of contact. But to be effective this contact must be a group rather than an individual contact. To develop Christian character we need to be isolated from the world; to draw the world to Christ we need to be in contact with it. A separate Christian is helpless; but a Christian group will be influential.

If we have not yet so far advanced as to find in the church aid and comfort for the lonely and the immature, this is true only of the Church Militant. In the Body of Christ there are fathomless riches if we can learn how to use them. We belong to the Communion of Saints and if we are really intelligent Christians that means not a truth we assent to but a company of which we are members, in which life touches and influences life. Think of the privilege that it is to be able to turn from the labor, the weariness, the fret of life, from all life's monotony, and to pass into active communion with all the household of God; to have found by practice that the members of the Body who to-day rejoice in the immediate presence of God are accessible to us. Those souls whose names we read in the Calendar of the Church Universal, those hosts of the blessed dead, have not passed from earth to some inaccessible heaven where they are so wrapped up in their own beatitude as to have forgotten all that interested them on earth. Nor has the length of time that separates us from the blessed ones of the past whose lives we read in the history of the Church deadened their interest in earth. They and we are to-day members of the same Body, interested in all

that concerns the life of that Body. The struggles of the Church Militant are of absorbing interest to the members of the Church Triumphant, for these two are one. We cannot think of S. Paul to-day as dreaming of his missionary labors of the past; we can only think of him as interested in the life, the successes and failures, of that Church whose frontiers he so contributed to expand, the divine character of which he so emphasised in his teaching. We cannot think of the Blessed Mother of God as so immersed in her own glory and privilege as to be uninterested in what goes on among us. We are sure of the love and sympathy and prayers of all the saints with us and for us in our labors here to-day. We, the earthly Church, are a part of their life, we the fellow-members of the Body are the objects of their care. They bend over us with solicitude and rejoice in our triumphs as in their own. And it is our privilege to make use of that interest—our privilege to appeal to their help. “The prayer of the righteous man availeth much”: and these are the supremely righteous who live in the very presence of God and know His mind.

The language of the universal Church is prayer and there is no reason why the members of that Church should not all communicate in that language, indeed there is every reason why they should. We surely need the aid and comfort that the other members of the Body can give. Anyone who has not simply believed but practiced the communion of saints knows how life is helped by the aid and sympathy of those who with us are in Christ. It is so wonderful to feel the love and sympathy of the blessed Mother, to know that she is interceding, is praying for us. We are so strong in the

strength of the prayers of the saints, so comforted in their society!

So guided and sustained, our spiritual life grows and unfolds in manifold experiences. There is always something new for those who are using the grace of God. Looking from the outside, critics say, "How narrow and uninteresting is the life of the Christian: in proportion as he is devout he must find life dull." Of course we find it difficult to understand others' interests, but I am sure that from the point of view of the saint nothing could be more deadly uninteresting than the life, say, of a society woman or a money-grabber in Wall Street. No doubt they would find a life dedicated to the service of God uninteresting; but certainly the lives of the saints show a variety and extent of interest that no other life can show.

And it is precisely this variety of interest that favors progress. Progress is impossible without variety. The man of one interest may extract that interest to the full, but he does not grow because of the limitation that he has imposed on himself. The Christian grows because of the very complexity of his life. He is awake to all sorts of contacts, energised by a wide variety of stimuli. He is acted upon by his brethren here in the world: he is vitalised by his constant approach to the sacraments: he is stirred by the power of saints' prayers. Into his life energies are passing from all sides. And as he responds energy goes forth from him, and the work of the Kingdom of God is forwarded by his action in it. As he progresses his interests are widened and his influence increased.

As a problem of individual growth in the spiritual life

we have to consider two elements. The first is negative. The Christian life is a progressive cleansing of the soul. We get, no doubt, beyond serious sins, but that is only the first chapter in spiritual progress. The true and serious battle of the growing Christian is with venial sin: the whole problem of self-mastery is there. The combat passes from the external to the internal and the issue has to be decided in the region of the spirit. External control is comparatively easy; it is interior control that is the vital test. In the spirit of man the Spirit of God strives for mastery and the issue is the issue of our sanctification or failure.

Writers on the spiritual life often speak as though that life were cut up into sections, and that we finished with one before we entered upon another. That is in no wise true. We do not complete the process of purification and then go on in growth; but growth itself is a part of the process of purification and an indication that it is going on well. Self-purification is a slow and difficult work, a work that requires much patience, especially patience with ourselves in our failures and disasters. Our human tendency is to want to rest, and we have to learn that this world is no place of rest, and especially not for the Christian who is seeking spiritual growth. We are not living in heaven; we are not even living in purgatory; but we are living in a world where the assaults of temptation are constant and the danger of falling ever-present. But it is a world too where the grace of God is offered in rich abundance and all the aids of the Spirit placed at our disposal. To grow, we need but to treat spiritual problems with the same seriousness with which we treat wordly problems. For the serious Christian there is no failure; the outcome is secure and the reward awaits.

The saints are praying, the Holy Spirit is helping our infirmities and Jesus is waiting to crown our efforts with His promised reward. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

THE END



